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國際學碩士學位論文

**Analyzing the Transforming Affinity of China-ROK-Japan's**

**Trilateral Relationship from 2005 to 2014**

**---From National Identity Perspective**

최근10년동안 중국-한국-일본 변화한 친밀도 분석연구

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---From National Identity Perspective**

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## **Abstract**

# **Analyzing the Transforming Affinity of China-ROK-Japan's Trilateral Relationship from 2005 to 2014 ---From National Identity Perspective**

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During the Cold War period, South Korea and Japan shared similar ideas and values of capitalism and anti-communism. In spite of these similar conditions and characteristics, South Korea's and Japan's relationship with China have significantly diverged in the post-Cold War era. Given the rise of China and the threaten from North Korea, South Korea and Japan should still have very strong incentive to work together to balance against the increasingly powerful China and the unsettled North Korea, thereby increase the likelihood of their own survival. Thus the primary puzzle of this research is that why is South Korea distancing from Japan while getting closer to China's embrace despite its similar conditions and characteristics with Japan in the Cold War era and the current threaten coming from rising China and North Korea?

While realist and liberalist explanation for the confusing regional phenomena

mainly focused on traditional factors such as military, trade and security, they presume that the state's interest and intention is given and do not investigate the interest, intention, and identity of the state and its development, thus weakening their strength of explanation. The factor of national identity has been necessary to explain and understand a set of puzzling phenomena in East Asia, such as the post-Cold War anti-American sentiment and pro-China tendency in South Korea, or increasing nationalistic frictions between China and Japan in spite of their strong economic ties, and the hostile relationship between South Korea and Japan to a certain extent. The key hypothesis is that: "The widening/narrowing of identity distance is hypothesized to increase/decrease the likelihood of inter-actors conflict. In other word, the amity is more likely when the two countries share a similar outlook on national identity, while a diverging composition of identities is prone to lead to enmity."

Using a variety of methods---comparative study of data of public opinion polls; controlled case studies, the research expects conclusions as: ①due to the uniqueness of cultural and historical background of East Asian countries, the factors of national identity offers more comprehensive explanations combined with neorealist and neoliberal perspectives to grasp the nature of South Korea's and Japan's relations with China for the last decade; ②although there were ups and downs from a microscopic viewpoint, the macroscopic trend is that the identity distance is narrowing between South Korea and China, sharing North Korean policy has worked for better relations, rather than harm for the last decade; while the identity distance is

widening in Sino-Japan relations that Japanese right-wing-led national identity has generated significant tensions and frictions in the relationship; which also leading to more conflictual and tense relationship with Korea, since the right-wing-led national identity has triggered the salience of territorial dispute and the history problem, even shared North Korean policy between South Korea and Japan during the term of President Lee Myung-Bak in South Korea had just brought in some amicable elements, never changed the inimical keynote of the bilateral relations.

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**Keywords:** National identity distance, Amity, Enmity, China, South Korea, Japan

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# Chapter I Introduction

## 1.1 Empirical puzzles and research questions

During the Cold War period, South Korea and Japan shared similar ideas and values of capitalism and anti-communism. In the security dimension, the two countries established tight trilateral security relationships with the US against communist threats. In the economic dimension, although there was a difference of degree in their economic achievements, South Korea and Japan both achieved rapid and substantial industrialization and development in the 1970s and 1980s. Both countries maintained government-planned and export-oriented economic structures, and the industries of electronics, semiconductors, shipbuilding, and automobiles were developed as their main exporting categories. In addition to strong economic ties with the US, they have also tried to establish economic relationships with China after the US-China détente at the beginning of 1970s.

In spite of these similar conditions and characteristics, South Korea's and Japan's relationship with China have significantly diverged in the post-Cold War era. In the case of South Korea, rising anti-American sentiments, discordant policies toward North Korea, and Seoul's effort to be more independent from the US influence had produced tensions with the US to some extent. For example, South Korean

President Roh Moo-Hyun declared his idea of “independent” foreign policy, which implies mainly independence from the US influence, in January 2004. In 2005, the South Korean government publicly announced its policy of “Balancer Role” in Northeast Asia, which was promulgated by President Roh’s core foreign policy making adviser, Lee Jong-seok, the Vice Secretary of National Security Council of the South Korean government at the time. Meanwhile, South Korea has increased political and economic cooperation with China. Since the end of the Cold War, South Korea people’s perception of China has developed in a positive way. For example, in 2004, South Korea people chose China as the most important country in terms of South Korean foreign relations and security. Furthermore, many young politicians in the ruling Uri Party exposed their pro-China tendency in 2004. <sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, while maintaining critical economic ties with China, Japan has tightened its security alliance with the US, which may be considered as a move against China. More specifically, US President, George W. Bush, and the Japanese Prime Minister, Koizumi Junichiro, upgraded their security alliance: under the US-Japan Roadmap for Realignment issued in 2005, the two allies seemed to establish de facto unified alliance mechanism to strengthen defense cooperation and capabilities in line with Washington’s Global Defense Posture Review to make its overseas forces rapidly deployable. Furthermore, the Japanese revision of junior high school history textbooks, the issues of the Japanese Prime Ministers’ visit to Yasukuni

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<sup>1</sup> *Donga Ilbo*, May 03, 2004. *South Korea and Maeil Kyongjae*, Nov 03, 2004.

shrine, the territorial dispute on Diaoyu (Chinese) or Senkaku (Japanese) islands, and the apology for the Japanese historical legacy of WWII have also worsened political relationship between China and Japan.<sup>2</sup>

Given the rise of China and the threaten from North Korea, South Korea and Japan should still have very strong incentive to work together to balance against the increasingly powerful China and the unsettled North Korea, thereby increase the likelihood of their own survival. However, although there were ups and downs in the trilateral relationship from a microscopic viewpoint, the macroscopic trend is that South Korea is coming closer to China rather than Japan. Thus the primary puzzle of this research is that why is South Korea distancing from Japan while getting closer to China's embrace despite its similar conditions and characteristics with Japan in the Cold War era and the current threaten coming from rising China and North Korea?

## **1.2 Existing theories and hypothesis**

Many neorealist and neoliberal scholars, including Kenneth N. Waltz, Stephen M. Walt, Robert Keohane and John G. Ikenberry have offered explanations for the confusing foreign relations in East Asia through analyzing the overall regional or bilateral relationships along with traditional factors such as power, security, economic

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<sup>2</sup> Hankwon Kim, "*Cultural and State Nationalism: South Korean and Japanese Relations with China*," Doctor Thesis in American University, 2007

interdependence, cultures, etc. The article tries to show that relations ranging from enmity to amity between states could be neither results from international anarchy or some inherent features of the international distribution of power, as realists argue, nor from the economic interdependence of states, as liberalists argue. Rather, they could be socially constructed through interactions between actors, which engenders certain social identities and relations favorable for peace or conflict.<sup>3</sup>

East Asia is a region with a number of flashpoints, and several great powers competing for regional influence. Countries spend significant military expenditures, which have risen since the Asian financial crisis of 1997. As a result, the dominant theoretical lens through which to analyze regional affairs in East Asia has been the realist one. Realists, including Morton Kaplan and Hans Morgenthau, have developed the balance of power theory, and then, Kenneth N. Waltz and Stephen M. Walt applied it to their alliance theories. Especially through his studies of alliance formations of balancing and bandwagoning, Walt concluded that most states choose allies in order to balance against the most serious threat. The theory hypothesizes that a regional grouping would form and advance if the danger of an external power or threat arises and increases. However, despite the cooperation between Japan and South Korea during the Cold War, it is questionable that whether grouping-balancing behavior is still the strategy adopted by Japan and Korea, because they have been conducting basically diverging attitudes towards rising China for the last decade.

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<sup>3</sup> Yongwook Ryu, *Identity and Security: Identity Distance Theory and Regional Affairs in Northeast and Southeast Asia*, Doctor Thesis in Harvard University, 2011

Walt also states that “balancing was far more common than bandwagoning, and bandwagoning was almost always confined to especially weak and isolated states.”<sup>4</sup> Related to this, South Korea’s and Japan’s behaviors in the post-Cold War period were even odd. For example, Japan, as a major state in the region, should have allied with China to balance against the external superpower hegemony of the US. Then, as many of its political leaders have longed for, Japan could have been more independent from the US influence and could have taken a higher political position in the international community. However, in reality, Japan tightened its alliance with the US in the post-Cold War era. In the case of South Korea, it, as a minor state in the region, should have sided with the US in order to ensure its national security. Although it has been a very controversial issue in South Korea, the Seoul government has been getting away from the alliance with the US for the last decade. Maybe Waltz’s “diverging threat perception” theory can give explanation to some extent, in fact, this question expands to other dimensions: Why has Japan perceived a threat from the “rise of China” in terms of an economic dimension, while South Korea has perceived it as an opportunity, albeit cautiously? Why has Japan kept watching and been wary of the growing Chinese regional political influence, while South Korea has not really cared or implicitly welcomed it? To answer these questions, I will bring the factor of national identity in this article.<sup>5</sup>

Another perspective has advocated that economic interdependence and

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<sup>4</sup> Walt Stephen M, *The Origins of Alliance*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1987, pp.263.

<sup>5</sup> Hankwon Kim, “*Cultural and State Nationalism: South Korean and Japanese Relations with China*,” Doctor Thesis in American University, 2007

integration would lead to a spillover effect over political, social, and cultural dimensions, would help to establish international institutions and norms, and would eventually reduce tensions and maintain peace among countries. This explanation is rooted in neo-functionalist and neo-liberal institutionalist approaches in the study of international political economy.<sup>6</sup> The greater the volume of transactions and flows between states, the more productive the interactions that occur between them. Growing interdependence develops shared interests, which make conflict increasingly costly. The expectation is that, as bilateral trade flow increases so will strategic trust and security cooperation. The reduction in economic interdependence would be expected to drive decline in strategic trust and less shared interest in security cooperation. In the case of Northeast Asia, the amount of international trade and the level of economic interconnectedness among countries have continuously increased for decades. However, the frictions have not declined as expected. Moreover, unlike the European Union, there is no emergence of regional institutions or regional economic integrational movement in the region. The establishment of the ASEAN plus Three (China, Japan and South Korea) can be the threshold of a new stage for regionalism in East Asia, but at the same time, the three countries have shown their own and different paths. More specifically, Japan gave more weight to maintaining good relationships with the US, ASEAN, and African countries rather than with China and South Korea, which increased nationalistic frictions between Japan and neighboring countries. South Korea, as an export-led country, should have kept

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<sup>6</sup> Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*, Princeton University Press, 1984.

balanced relationships between the US and China in order to maximize its economic interest. However, Seoul has led its relationship with the US into alienation, while developing and consolidating its relationship with China and North Korea for the last decade.

To be clear, bringing national identity in does not argue that realists' or liberalists' theory do not matter. Power dynamics and economic interdependence are important factors in affecting regional affairs, but they are not the only important factors, let alone the most important. Our understanding would improve significantly if we expanded our analytical horizon to include other factors, which in this article refers to national identity. I applied a relatively fresh concept called identity distance, and operationalize it to explain the puzzling phenomenon in East Asia. Identity distance is the distance between groups on relevant measures of identity. More formally, it refers to perceived socio-psychological differences between groups, and measures the degree to which the members of the in-group perceive themselves to be different from the relevant out-groups.<sup>7</sup> The concepts and theory framework regarded to national identity distance would be introduced in detail in the next chapter. Since identity distance is held to be the key predictor of bilateral relations, the argument in favor of the theory is that the familiar independent variables of competing explanations matter for bilateral relations insofar as they affect identity distance. In other words, to the extent that factors other than national identity distance affect

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<sup>7</sup> Yongwook Ryu, *Identity and Security: Identity Distance Theory and Regional Affairs in Northeast and Southeast Asia*, Doctor Thesis in Harvard University, 2011

bilateral relations, it is primarily because of their effect on national identity distance.

Thus the key hypothesis is that:

*“The widening/narrowing of identity distance is hypothesized to increase/decrease the likelihood of inter-actors conflict. In other word, the amity is more likely when the two countries share a similar outlook on national identity, while a diverging composition of identities is prone to lead to enmity.”*

### **1.3 Methodology and expected results**

Indeed, different causal stories (for amity/neutrality/enmity between nations) may operate at different periods in the same bilateral relationship. Grasping the why and how of changes in bilateral relations will require empirically rich case studies. Since national identity distance is the main theoretical framework, the research will measure it among the three countries through controlled case studies to measure the national identity distance, including the territorial disputes, the historical issues, and the North Korean issues. As many scholars point out, there are two inherent limits of case study methodology. The first one is “the problem of uniqueness” that the result of case study cannot be generalized to other cases, and the second one is the lower control for the effect of perturbing third variables. However, since it is a comparative study of two specific countries focusing on specific issues, aims at offering a more



appropriate explanation to the puzzling phenomenon rather to produce a general theory, the method of case study is more appropriate than the method of large-N for this research.<sup>8</sup>

The research expects conclusions as: ①due to the uniqueness of cultural and historical background of East Asian countries, the factors of national identity offers more comprehensive explanations combined with neorealist and neoliberal perspectives to grasp the nature of South Korea's and Japan's relations with China for the last decade; ②although there were ups and downs from a microscopic viewpoint, the macroscopic trend is that the identity distance is narrowing between South Korea and China, sharing North Korean policy has worked for better relations, rather than harm for the last decade; while the identity distance is widening in Sino-Japan relations that Japanese right-wing-led national identity has generated significant tensions and frictions in the relationship; which also leading to more conflictual and tense relationship with Korea, since the right-wing-led national identity has triggered the salience of territorial dispute and the history problem, even shared North Korean policy between South Korea and Japan during the term of President Lee Myung-Bak in South Korea had just brought in some amicable elements, never changed the inimical keynote of the bilateral relations.

Moreover, this research project aims to make three academic contributions.

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<sup>8</sup> Hankwon Kim, *Cultural and State Nationalism: South Korean and Japanese Relations with China*, Doctor Thesis in American University, 2007

Firstly, it will contribute to the study of the casual mechanism between national identity and amity/neutrality/enmity relations in East Asia. Secondly, the research may contribute to enhancing research on comparative studies of Japan's and South Korea's. There has been much literature about Northeast Asian international relations, but it was usually focused on the US-PRC, the US-Japan, the US-ROK, the PRC-Japan bilateral, or the US-PRC-Japanese trilateral relationships since the Cold War era. Therefore, I hope that the research is a useful analysis for further comparative studies of Japan's and South Korea's relations with China. Finally, I hope that my research can contribute in a practical manner by helping problem solving and proper foreign policies choosing through adding the "lens" of national identity to the neorealism and neoliberalism "lenses".<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Hankwon Kim, *Cultural and State Nationalism: South Korean and Japanese Relations with China*, Doctor Thesis in American University, 2007

## Chapter 2 Theoretical Concepts and Theories

In international relations, scholars have traditionally focused narrowly on the use of force as the most effective way to guarantee the state's external security in an anarchical world. Both liberal institutionalists and constructivists, however, have shown that anarchy does not necessarily produce the outcomes that (neo)realists say it would produce. International organizations as well as states act to coordinate and regulate interstate affairs. International norms and rules also set the outer boundaries within which the state is expected to behave, and generate reputational as well as material costs if violated. The world policy perspective in sociology also suggests that the world has become less and less anarchical with a growing number of international organizations and intensifying cultural processes. All this suggests that the world is not quite the Hobbesian state of nature, the description of the international system uncritically embraced by realists. Indeed, there is enough reason to view interstate affairs as taking place in a social environment. Actors bring their own goals, purposes, and values to the international arena and develop a new set of goals, purposes and values through interactions with others. Identity occupies a central place in this process. It is the aim of this article to convince the reader of the analytical utility of identity distance as a variable and its effect on important phenomena in interstate affairs.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Yongwook Ryu, *Identity and Security: Identity Distance Theory and Regional Affairs in Northeast and Southeast Asia*, Doctor Thesis in Harvard University, 2011

## 2.1 Theoretical backgrounds

Most IR scholars have been so unwilling to examine how identity could affect security. In general, they have been hesitant to employ the concept of identity to understand and analyze international politics. Perhaps, it is because of the infeasibility of development of a common identity among states, although the development of the European Union should make this statement questionable. Or perhaps, it reflects the concern with the lack of rigorous research method, which, to some people, is a reason why identity can be dismissed as a serious factor in international politics. Even so, the lack of rigorous research method should be taken as a challenge for the identity research rather than dismissal of the concept. The right response should be to encourage more active research on how identity can affect international relationships.

Whatever the reason may be, the neglect of identity as a variable in the field of international relations is not consistent with the popularity of the concept in other social science disciplines such as sociology, psychology, and anthropology and, in other subfields of political science such as comparative politics. In those disciplines, one finds an active research program utilizing identity to understand important topics ranging from ethnic, racial politics, and community development to school programs, management in firms, and immigration policies.

Following the rise of constructivism in IR, however, a few but important works

have appeared that seek to utilize identity to understand international politics. One of the main contributions of this research is the notion that state identity shapes state preferences and actions. Both Wendt and Katzenstein's edited volume helped to put identity at the center of much constructivist theorizing workings. Wendt's systemic constructivism places more emphasis on the impact of the international environment, while authors in Katzenstein's edited volume view identity essentially as a domestic attribute arising from national ideologies of collective distinctiveness.

The security community literature further advanced the utility of identity in IR by explicitly applying the concept to explain possible security communities in different parts of the world.<sup>11</sup> The security community is an empirical verification of the constructivist logic that "anarchy is what state make of it". If some states can sustain friendships deep and long enough to constitute power and interests as secondary in their security considerations, then it must also be that competitive anarchy is just one possible culture of anarchy. Works by Finnemore(1996), Reus-Smit(1999), Hopf(2002), Cederman and Daase(2003), Johnston(2007), Rousseau(2006) are all examples applying and extending constructivist theoretical orientations in international relations.<sup>12</sup>

Despite these important developments, constructivism still remains as a general

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<sup>11</sup> Acharya Amitav, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the Problem of Regional Order*, London: Routledge, 2001.

<sup>12</sup> Yongwook Ryu, "Identity and Security: Identity Distance Theory and Regional Affairs in Northeast and Southeast Asia," Doctor Thesis in Harvard University, 2011

approach of investigation rather than as a theory similar to realism, liberalism, or institutionalism. Much of the earlier foundational constructivist literature focused heavily on the philosophical and meta-theoretical issues such as ontology, epistemology, properties of theory, etc. While their efforts opened up space for new perspectives and arguments to be introduced in IR, more efforts should go toward theorizing and empirical research and testing in the future.

In addition, there is a dearth of work explicitly employing identity as variable to understand important outcomes in interstate relations. As a result, there is still much doubt about the utility and feasibility of identity. In this article, I seek to narrow down this gap in the IR literature. I applied the concept called identity distance, which was used by Dr. Yongwook Ryu to examine the different patterns of interstate relations between Northeast and Southeast Asia since the 1980s and show how identity-related issues have affected the contrasting evolution of interstate interactions in the two sub-regions of East Asia, to the comparative study of Japan's and South Korea's diverging attitudes towards China. Before we delve into the empirical analysis, however, it is necessary to set out the theoretical foundation for identity distance theory.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Yongwook Ryu, *Identity and Security: Identity Distance Theory and Regional Affairs in Northeast and Southeast Asia*, Doctor Thesis in Harvard University, 2011

## 2.2 Theoretical concepts

Although taking time to define everything is not desirable, care need to at least be taken to define one's major concept of analysis so that they are concrete and measurable. In social scientific research, these concepts are usually the independent/explanatory variable (the phenomenon at the beginning of a causal story) and dependent/outcome variable (the phenomenon the researcher is trying to explain). The independent and dependent variables of this study are national identity distance and amity/neutrality/enmity between bilateral relations, the dependent variable further formed the transforming affinity triangles linking China, South Korea and Japan.

### National identity distance

Identity is a notoriously slippery subject. Identity can be a social category (race, gender, religion, class, professional trade, generation), a trait (intelligent, athletic, stubborn, moody), one's self-concept (personality), or the individual's relationship with or role in a group (identification). Or identity can be about the way groups relate to each other. The latter is known as a social identity, wherein the self-concept or self-representation is understood not as an individual person, but as a collective in-group. This dissertation considers national identity a social identity where the in-group is the nation and the out-groups are other relevant nations. According to Professor Michael Barnett of the University of Minnesota, identities "are not [simply]

personal or psychological; they are social and relational...all political identities depend on the actor's interaction with others...national and state identities are partly formed in relationship to other nations and states.”<sup>14</sup> To be clear, the present study does not focus on how a new identity is created by “othering” an oppositional subject.<sup>15</sup> Rather, this study begins with established national identities --- those of China, South Korea and Japan --- and considers how they actively interact with each other.

Generally speaking, “national identity” refers to the set of fundamental characteristics and shared attributes that constitute the similarity of members and distinguish on nation from another. These can involve cultural norms (language, traditions, religion), external circumstance (power, reputation, geography), and domestic organization (political system, level of development, state-society relations). National identity is manifested and transmitted via historical narrative and national symbols, which are internalized by members, allowing for a sense of linked fate (shared history and common future). But national identities are also constantly being contested, that is members disagree about the nation's defining characteristics and thus these characteristics evolve over time.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Michael N. Barnett, “The Israeli Identity and the Peace Process,” in Shibley Telhami and Michael N. Barnett, *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, Cornell University Press, 2002, pp. 62.

<sup>15</sup> For such an approach, see Iver B. Neumann, *Uses of the Other: “The East” in European Identity Formation*, University of Minnesota Press, 1998.

<sup>16</sup> Identity can thus be treated as an independent variable (e.g. certain types of identity drive certain behaviors) or dependent variable (e.g., certain changes in the environment inspire some transformation of identity). In this study, national identity is not the subject of study per se, rather the independent variable is the in-group members' perceptions of identity distance between their country and another. So the explanatory variable is identity-related and identity issues are on the left-hand of the dissertation's causal story.



There is obviously a lot of content under the banner of national identity, indeed, too much for any one study to reasonably consider. So the prudent thing to do is limit one's working definition of national identity to the parts of particular interest, i.e. the identity content most relevant for the research question at hand. As important as sushi, Kimchi and Jiaozi may be to national identities, these probably do not matter much to international relations. To focus on the most relevant content, this study limits its concept of national identity to such dimension: the normative beliefs that prescribe the nation's appropriate role in the world and how it interacts with other nations. Simply putting an adjective in front of a country's national identity is problematic because of the complexity explained above. With this background covered, it is possible to offer a simple definition of the independent variable of this study:

*National Identity Distance refers to perceived socio-psychological differences between groups, and measures the degree to which the members of the in-group (one's own country) perceive themselves to be different from relevant out-groups (that of another),<sup>17</sup> in terms of international role.*

Examining national identity distance in each country about the other will no doubt shed light on each country's nationalism. What's more, tracing the causal path from national identity distance to amity/neutrality/enmity between bilateral relations

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<sup>17</sup> Yongwook Ryu, *Identity and Security: Identity Distance Theory and Regional Affairs in Northeast and Southeast Asia*, Doctor Thesis in Harvard University, 2011

can be expected to illuminate the interaction of both countries' nationalism. But the causal variable of this study is not the intensity of "my country right or wrong" beliefs or the willingness of actors to sacrifice for the national interest. Rather, the focus of this study is perceptions of identity distance between nations.

*Amity, neutrality and enmity between bilateral relations*

Terms like "amity" and "enmity" --- even more, terms like "friendship" and "hostility" --- must be used with caution in discussing interstate relationships. These terms are taken from the universe of interpersonal relations and they convey a sense of emotional involvement. In contrast, diplomatic postures of amity, neutrality and enmity do not depend on emotional conditions and may in fact contradict them. Thus, some Americans may feel enmity for the colored races, but this does not prevent "cordial" or "friendly" diplomatic relations between the United States and many African and Asian nations.<sup>18</sup> A government, which represents a nation-state as corporate actor, is expected to be guided not by sentiment --- the sentiment either of the policy-makers themselves or of the people --- but by a dispassionate assessment of the national interest. However, this dissociation between the cold-blooded pursuit of the national interest and human feelings is never complete.

Relations among states can vary in a wide spectrum from the extreme of total

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<sup>18</sup> Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1962

enmity of two belligerents in a fight to the finish to the extreme of amity when two states let down their guards completely. And the dividing line between amity and enmity is not always clear-cut. There is a twilight zone in which governments have trouble deciding whether a tenuous relationship of amity has given way to enmity or vice versa.<sup>19</sup> Thus instead of abstract amity or enmity, this study introduces a scale of possible indicators of bilateral relationship.

*Drawing on the Hobbesian, Lockean, and Kantian categories of state-to-state relations presented by Wendt (1999), this study posits three distinct tiers of bilateral relationship corresponding to identity distance: at the level of mutual co-existence (enmity-wide distance), mutual respect (neutrality-moderate), or mutual understanding (amity-narrow distance).*

Both national identity distance and amity/neutrality/enmity are variables that can be expected to exhibit certain “stickiness” --- that is, they do not vary dramatically from one year to the next. This is because they involve deeply held, entrenched, internalized beliefs. Those beliefs may be activated more in some contexts than others. Certain developments in the day-to-day news cycle may also flare up identity issues and highlight bilateral relationships. However, deeply held beliefs tend to be easily affirmed by current events, and tend to be resistant to change, even when contradicted

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<sup>19</sup> Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1962

by new information.<sup>20</sup> The “stickiness” means that the internalized beliefs can be expected to change gradually, as ideas evolve overtime. Such “path dependence” was famously alluded to by Marx: “men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past.”<sup>21</sup> Thus the “stickiness” calls for identifying key turning points, such as changes in leadership, which may correspond with adjustment in perceptions about a country’s international role (national identity distance), and drive changes in its international relations (amity/neutrality/enmity). It is particularly apparent in East Asia and also suggests a focus on major trends or cycles leading up to and following these turning points.

### **2.3 Theoretical hypotheses**

Establishing a causal relationship between national identity distance and bilateral relationship requires specification of mechanisms linking the independent and dependent variables. The main theoretical hypotheses of this study is that:

*“The widening/narrowing of identity distance is hypothesized to increase/decrease the likelihood of inter-actors conflict. In other word, the amity is*

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<sup>20</sup> Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, Princeton University Press, 1976.

<sup>21</sup> On path dependence and process tracing, see Paul Pierson and Theda Skocpol, “Historical Institutionalism in Contemporary Political Science”, in Ira Karznelson and Helen Milner, eds., *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*, Norton, 2002.

*more likely when the two countries share a similar outlook on national identity, while a diverging composition of identities is prone to lead to enmity.”*

It needs to be tested against the evidence, and the causal mechanisms need to be observed in an examination of the trilateral relationship, which will be introduced in the next part. Without offering a causal story and checking whether it squares with reality, correlation is not causation, and one could not say that national identity distance explains transforming affinity of China-ROK-Japan trilateral relations during 2005 to 2014.

Considering the component of another country's identity associated with its international role, foreign policy makers face three sets of questions about themselves' and the other state's national identity. First, what is the country's essential contribution to international peace and security --- does it add to or detract from global stability? In East Asia particularly, is it a country with aggressive territorial claims, which fundamentally challenges the regional peace and stability? Second, how does that nation-state relate to others --- does it respect the interests of its neighbors and partners, and devote sufficient attention to productive relations?<sup>22</sup> In East Asia particularly, is it maintaining a revisionist historical narrative, which may hurt the sentiments of related countries and be regarded as a reflection of the current policy? Third, how does that nation-state relate to international norms and institutions

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<sup>22</sup> Naturally, the relations with third party states that matter most to State A's perception of State B are those relations of State B with states particularly relevant to State A.

--- is it by nature a supporter of multilateralism and the application of international law? In East Asia particularly, how does it deal with a troublesome neighbor country --- North Korea?

Policymakers' identity perceptions of themselves' and another nation states' involve subjective answers to these questions, colored by in-group cultural biases, stereotypes and cognitive limitations. Then the answers lead to the tiers of bilateral relationship: mutual co-existence (enmity-wide distance), mutual respect (neutrality-moderate distance), or mutual understanding (amity-narrow distance).

Enmity involves a strong sense of uncertainty or even disdain about the other, yielding mutual suspicion about national intentions, and leading to strained bilateral interaction on security issues and perhaps military rivalry. When two nations perceive wide national identity distance on the basic nationalist requirement that the state be coterminous with the nation, this is an indicator of enmity between nations. If disagreement exists over territorial boundaries and sovereignty --- whether jointly disputing a significant area or if one side does not recognize major claims of the other --- the in-group may be uncertain whether the national identity of the out-group can co-exist. It is because that it may be important for a nation's identity that it be seen as more military powerful, economically advanced or culturally superior than a particular other. It is noteworthy that the enmity relations are not absolute but relative. Since the research focused on the transforming affinity, although the keynote would

be enmity on account of the territorial disputes, the possibility of amicable elements are not totally excluded.

In contrast, amity means that two nation-states enjoy some sense of shared values and mutual understanding. To the extent the two sides are able to address security issues with a sense of “we-ness”. Narrow distance suggests coexistence and mutual respect of international roles, but still differences exist over whether those roles are adequately met or properly fulfilled. Agreement may exist on broad foreign policy goals (regional stability, economic development, preventing terrorism), but governments may look down upon each other’s approaches.<sup>23</sup> The in-group often draws favorable distinctions between their nation’s international contributions and those of other countries. Hence letting down guards completely cannot realize in the modern anarchical world, there are only amicable elements to some extent based on common goals.

Neutrality means that the in-group is struggling to establish mutual respect with the outsiders so a broad sense of shared purpose is in the cards. But based on the recognition of coexistence, moderate identity distance allows space for focusing on shared interests with enough trust to engage in some strategic coordination. In terms of international role, states may have perceptions of difference over international reputations. When the in-group member take issue with the status and standing of

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<sup>23</sup> For example, two governments may see a common threat and agree on the principle of diplomacy before military action, but may disagree on when the use of force is necessary.

their state versus another, mutual respect is tenuous and moderate identity distance is evident. Mutual respect is particularly difficult when two nation-states have difficulty tolerating each other's official version of the past and when contested elements of history form significant parts of national narrative and identity.<sup>24</sup> The history problem in Northeast Asia has even been characterized as "history war" due to its intensity and the fervent reactions it generates. China and South Korea basically share the common stance regarding to the history textbook revision issue and the Yasukuni Shrine issue, it is one of the reasons that attracting each other much closer. Meanwhile, Abe is removing the possibilities of moderating China-Japan or ROK-Japan relations little by little. The details will be investigated in the following chapters.

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<sup>24</sup> Leif-Eric Easley, *"Perceived National Identity Differences and Strategic Trust: Explaining Post-Cold War Security Relations among China, Japan, South Korea and the United States,"* Doctor Thesis in Harvard University, 2010.



### **Chapter 3 Transforming Affinity in the Trilateral Relationship**

The black swan was first discovered in Western Australia by a Dutch expedition led by Willem de Vlamingh in 1697. At that time when everyone thought all swans were white, the discovery of a black swan remind a necessity of reexamining the existing knowledge and theories. Today the black swan is used as a metaphor for a surprise event or outlier that deviates from our regular expectations to the point of impossibility, and has a great impact.<sup>25</sup> The trilateral relation in Northeast Asia might be a black swan event in international relations. According to comparative study on data of public opinion polls, the decade from 2005 to 2014 can be divided into three phase on a micro level, it is Phase I (2005-2007), Phase II (2008-2012) and Phase III (2013-2014). However, the macro trend is that South Korea getting closer to China instead of Japan. The should-cooperating ROK and Japan, the implacable-opposing China and Japan, and the transforming affinities affected by South Korea's strategic choice will be examined in this and next three sections.

From the perspective of (neo)realism and (neo)liberal-institutionalism, the Korea-Japan dyad should stick by each other's side. Both theories would predict a high degree of cooperation and close political, economic, and military relations between the two countries. Both Korea and Japan were on the side of the liberal-capitalist camp during the Cold War, resisting the communist. Both facing the

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<sup>25</sup> Yongwook Ryu, *Identity and Security: Identity Distance Theory and Regional Affairs in Northeast and Southeast Asia*, Doctor Thesis in Harvard University, 2011

North Korean threat, and are concerned with the growing power and influence of China as well as its uncertain intentions and political future. Both are key allies of the US, with whom they have extensive cooperation in the military and security areas, including joint exercises and intelligence sharing system. Both are liberal democracies, share similar sociopolitical values, and embrace the open market economy system. They enjoy each other's pop culture and food, and there are lots of human exchanges at various levels covering a wide range of issues.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, on surface, there is strong reason to believe that the two countries should have extensive political and military cooperation. The reality is somewhat different and presents a mixed result. In terms of trade and human exchanges, there does have been a remarkable development. Japan is Korea's third partner only after China and the USA, and Korea is the fourth largest to Japan. Their bilateral trade volume has increased and approached \$100 billion per year in 2010. Their human exchanges have also increased at an exponential rate. In the 1950s and 1960s, there were only a few hundred Japanese and Koreans or even fewer visiting the other country, but in 2010, the number of Japanese visitors to Korea increased to more than 3 million, while over 2.5 millions Koreans visited Japan. Despite the positive trends in trade and human exchanges, there has been very little progress on military and security cooperation between Korea and Japan. For example, in January 2011, the defense ministers of Korea and Japan ---Kim Kuang Jin and Kitazawa Doshimi --- met in Seoul to discuss ways to deepen their military cooperation involving sharing information and improving communications. When the

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<sup>26</sup> Yongwook Ryu, *Identity and Security: Identity Distance Theory and Regional Affairs in Northeast and Southeast Asia*, Doctor Thesis in Harvard University, 2011

media reported the news that Korea was discussing with Japan to improve military cooperation, the Korean defense minister was quick to announce that it would take a gradual approach taking societal feelings in Korea about Japan and that the military cooperation arrangements, if concluded, would only apply in non-combat situation i.e. only for humanitarian purposes.<sup>27</sup> On the same day, a conservative newspaper Chosun Daily issued an editorial arguing that the reason the Korean government should be cautious about a military cooperation pact with Japan is because the partner is Japan.<sup>28</sup> It continued, “considering the history of Japanese colonialism and Japan’s continuous claim of sovereignty over Dokdo, it is questionable whether it is appropriate to cooperate militarily with Japan.”<sup>29</sup>

From a telescopic angle, South Korea and Japan do not necessarily agree on the regional security and diplomatic architecture, though economic and human transactions link them more tightly than before, rather, South Korea are getting closer to China’s embrace. If seen from a microscopic angle, the affinity among the three Northeast Asian countries reveal more complexity, three different phases for the last decade can be discerned in terms of wide/moderate/narrow national identity distance between two of the three. The period between 2005 and 2007 may be characterized as a phase when South Korea and China teamed up against Japan. The period between

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<sup>27</sup> Donga Ilbo, “*Korea-Japan negotiating the first military cooperation arrangement*”, January 5, 2011.

<sup>28</sup> Yongwook Ryu, “*Identity and Security: Identity Distance Theory and Regional Affairs in Northeast and Southeast Asia*,” Doctor Thesis in Harvard University, 2011

<sup>29</sup> Chosun Ilbo, “*The Goals and Limits of Korea-Japan Military Cooperation Agreement should be made Clear*”, January 4, 2011.

2008 and 2012 may be categorized as a phase when South Korea and Japan worked together while both nations had uncomfortable ties with China. However, the third phase is since ever after 2013, when the current Prime Minister Abe Shinzo and President Park Geun-Hae took office in Japan and Korea, the history issues and territory disputes were brought to another peak, driving South Korea towards China's embrace again.

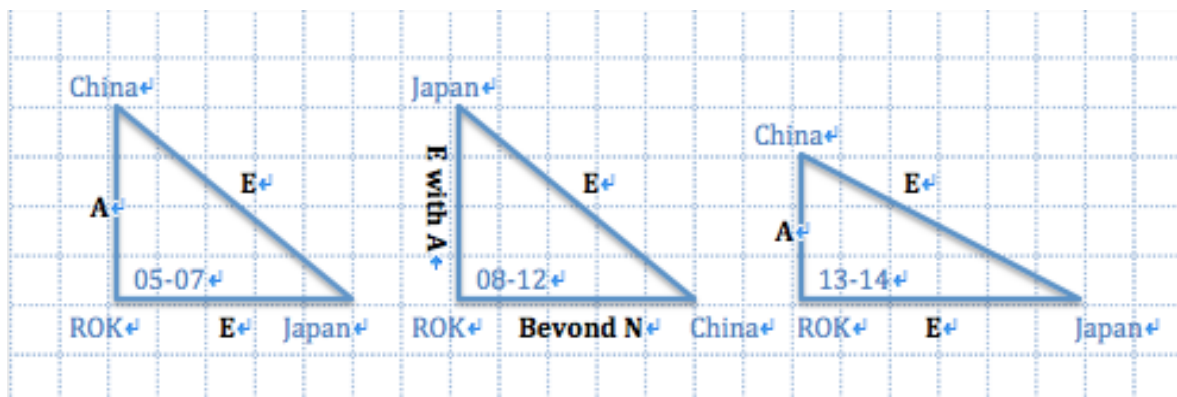


Chart 1 Transforming Affinity of Trilateral Relationship

As shown above, the changing affinities are simplified as three right triangles. As we discussed, there is neither absolutely amity nor absolutely enmity. The tier of bilateral relations is determined by the keynote and adjusting with other variables. For instance, the triangle in the middle, because of territorial disputes and historical controversies, the keynote of ROK and Japan is enmity, but this does not hamper them to share some North Korean policy to some degree so do the amicable elements come into being. Nevertheless, the conspicuousness of historical issue between China and South Korea during the period driving the bilateral relation beyond neutrality on

one hand, the disagreements over North Korean policy between the two distancing the national identity further on the other hand. Then it is not difficult to understand that why Japan and South Korea worked together against China from about 2008 to 2012. And since the distance between China and Japan hasn't shift a lot for the last decade, the attitudes of South Korea towards each country become one of the key indicators. During 2005 and 2007, the high level visits from Korea to China is 10 times, including President Roh Moo-Hyun's visit on October, 2006; while the number is only 4 times to Japan, without President-level visit. On the contrary, the high level visits from Korea to Japan up to 18 times while just 9 times to China from 2008 to 2012. Korea former President Lee Myung-Bak chose to visit to Japan prior to China when he came into office in 2008; it did send a signal of restarting shuttle diplomacy that had been broken off since 2005 between Korea and Japan. However, when the current Prime Minister Abe Shinzo of Japan and President Park Geun-Hye of Korea took office in 2013, historical issues and territory disputes were brought to another peak, widening the distance between Korea and Japan even further than before. On the plus side, Park is perhaps the best prepared South Korean president to engage with her counterpart in China.<sup>30</sup> Two countries have had exchanged high-level visits for several times including Park's official visit to China in 2013 and Xi Jinping's official visit to Korea in 2014. Beijing has stressed the importance of Park's trust-politic while Park has accentuated the critical Chinese role in maintaining stability on the Korean Peninsula. On the other hand, Korean-Japanese relation is not as same as

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<sup>30</sup> Chung Min Lee, "The Park Geun-Hye Administration's Foreign and Security Policy Challenges," *Korea Chair Platform*, May 1, 2013.

Korean-Chinese's, which are overall on a positive trajectory. Although President Park has chosen not to exploit endemic and deeply rooted historical cleavages with Japan for domestic political gains, prospects for significant improvement in Seoul-Tokyo relationship remain slim, at least in the short to mid-term. In 2013, South Korea canceled what was to become Foreign Minister Yun Byung-Se's first meeting with his Japanese counterpart, Foreign Minister Kishida Fumio after Deputy Prime Minister Taro Aso and several other members of the Abe cabinet visited the Yasukuni Shrine that memorializes Japan's war dead, including a number of war criminals.<sup>31</sup> In 2014, Park and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe have, out of courtesy, made contact for several times, which was under the mediation of the US at some international occasions, including the ASEAN+3 Summit, the East Asia Summit, the APEC meeting, and the G20 Summit. The distancing relationship can be further proved by data comes from "The 2nd Joint Japan-South Korea Public Opinion Poll (2014)" conducted by the Genron NPO<sup>32</sup>.

Between May and July 2014, Japanese nonprofit organization The Genron NPO and East Asia Institute (EAI) have conducted joint public opinion polls targeting the Japanese and South Korean public. The objective of this survey is to continue monitoring the state of mutual understanding between Japanese and South Korean public, in order to contribute to close the national identity gap. It is the second joint Japan-South Korea Public Opinion Poll; while the first was conducted in 2013. Thus

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<sup>31</sup> Chung Min Lee, "The Park Geun-Hye Administration's Foreign and Security Policy Challenges," *Korea Chair Platform*, May 1, 2013.

<sup>32</sup> The Genron NPO is a not-for-profit think tank in Japan.

the data can be used to prove distancing South Korean-Japanese relations in the past two years. Chart 2 shows the data related to the impressions of one another's country in 2013 and 2014. The impression of South Korea among the Japanese public was further aggravated. Although the impression of Japan among the South Korean public had slightly improved, 70% still had negative impression on Japan. Regarding the impressions of one another's country over the past two years (Chart 3), the percentage of Japanese respondents who answered that it had "worsened" (including "greatly worsened" and "relatively worsened"), was 52.6%, which was 13 points higher than that of last year. On the South Korean side, respondents who answered "worsened" (same as the above) were 46.7%, which was on the same level as last year. Meanwhile, those respondents who choose "no substantial change" were 42.6% (52.9% last year) among Japanese, and 50.1% (29.7% last year) among South Korean. Therefore, no significant signals could be found for a better bilateral relationship.

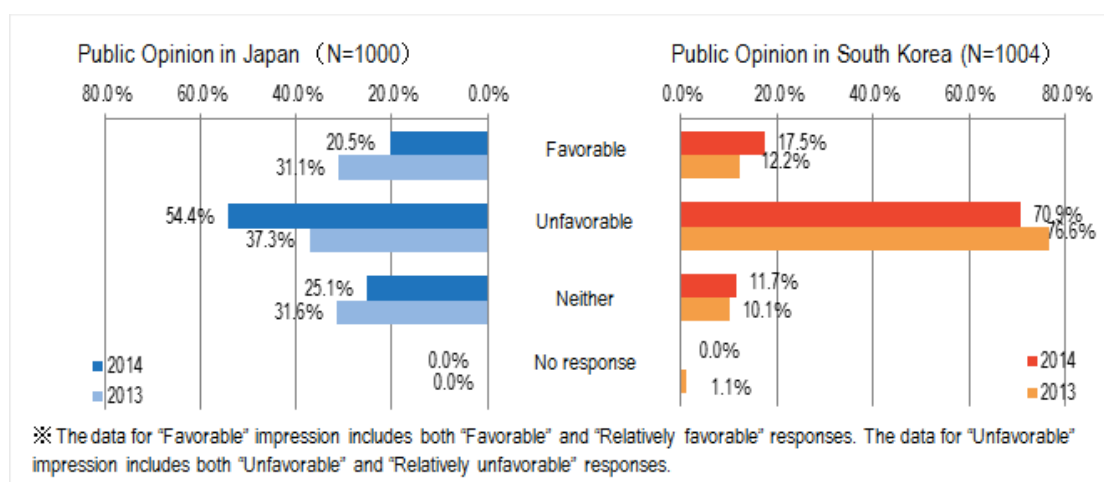


Chart 2 Impressions of One Another's Country (Japan-South Korea)

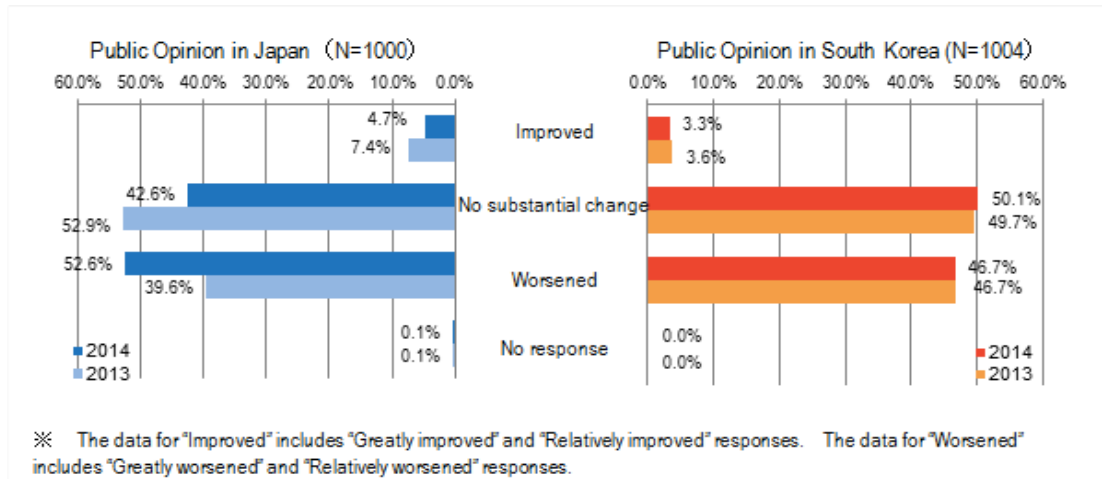


Chart 3 Changes in Impressions of One Another's Country (Japan-South Korea)

In terms of Chinese-Japanese relations, during July and August in 2014, the Genron NPO and China Daily conducted joint opinion polls targeting the citizens of Japan and China. This is the 10th annual opinion poll; these polls have been jointly conducted since 2005 when Japan-China relations were at their lowest. The objective of the survey is to continuously monitor the state of mutual understanding and perceptions of the Japanese and Chinese public toward each other, and their changes over time. Thus the data is more comprehensive than the Japan-South Korea public opinion poll, which has just started in two years. The impressions of one another's country in Chart 4 show continuously unfavorable bilateral relations for the last decade and the condition even worsened since 2013. The Japanese public regards China's powerhouse-like acts as the reason for the worsening impression of China. For the Chinese public, Senkaku/Diaoyu and Japanese historical understanding are always prominent. Moreover, on "Chart 5: The change in impressions of one another's country over the past year", 66.7% of Japanese respondents and 57.3% of Chinese



respondents answered that the impression toward each other's country has "worsened".

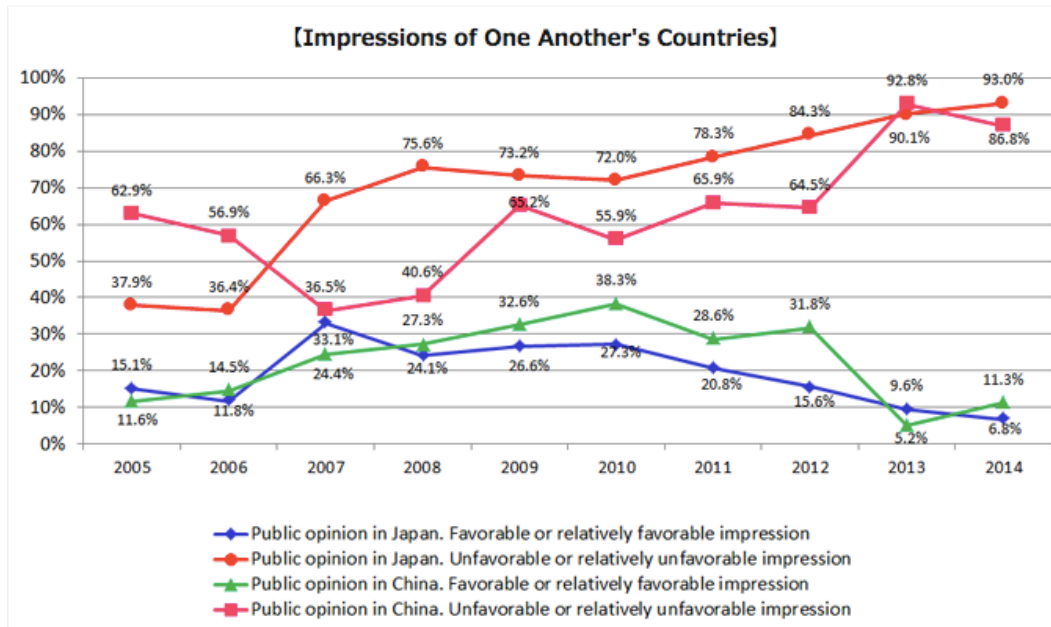


Chart 4 Impressions of One Another Country (Japan-China)

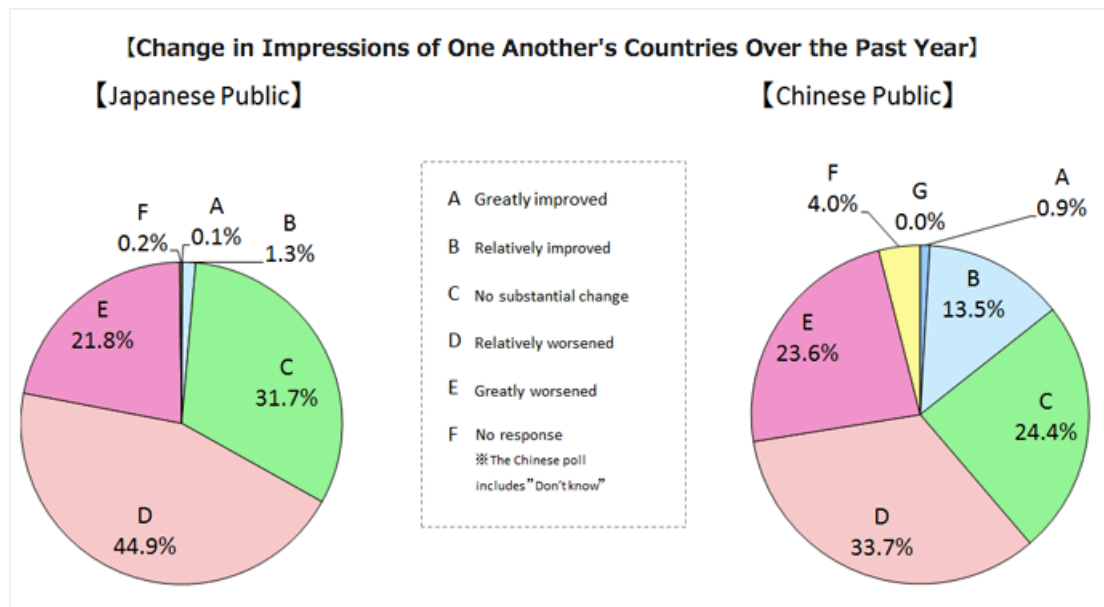


Chart 5 Changes in Impressions of One Another's Country Over the Past Year (Japan-China)

The Genron NPO introduced questions to measure the importance and affinity of

bilateral relations in public both in the Japan-China public polls and Japan-South Korea public polls. Data shows that although more than half of the Japanese polled felt more affinity toward South Korea than China, South Koreans are feeling more affinity to China than Japan, and regard relations with China as more important, vice versa; Chinese polled out more emphasis on China-South Korea relations than China-Japan relations. As shown in Chart 6-1 and Chart 6-2, 47.0% of Japanese viewed Japan-China relations and Japan-South Korea relations were equally important. 15.6% of Japanese viewed Japan-China relations more important. 12.4% of Japanese viewed the Japan-South Korea relations more important. 43.5% of Chinese viewed China-Japan relations and China-South Korea relations were equally important. 33.3% of Chinese regarded China-South Korea relations were more important than China-Japan relations. Only 6.5% of Chinese viewed China-Japan relations more important. Chart 7 shows that 37.2% of Japanese (45.5% last year) felt more affinity toward South Korea than China. Only 5.0% of Japanese (5.9% last year) felt more affinity toward China. 31.8% of Japanese (24.6% last year) felt no affinity toward either China or South Korea. However, 52.7% of Chinese felt more affinity toward South Korea than Japan while only 3.5% of Chinese felt more affinity toward Japan. 21.8% of Chinese felt no affinity toward either Japan or South Korea.

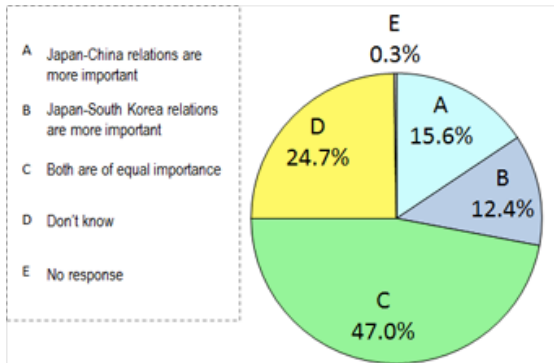


Chart 6-1 The Importance of Japan-China Relations and Japan-South Korea Relations towards Japanese

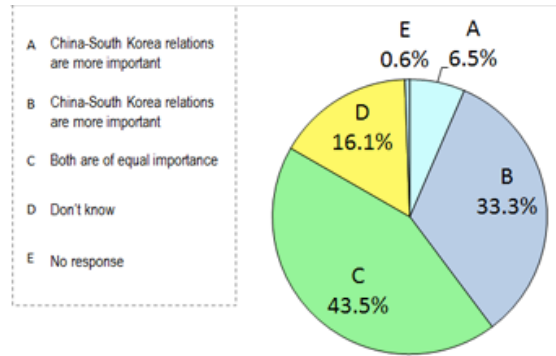


Chart 6-2 The Importance of China-Japan Relations and China-South Korea Relations towards Chinese

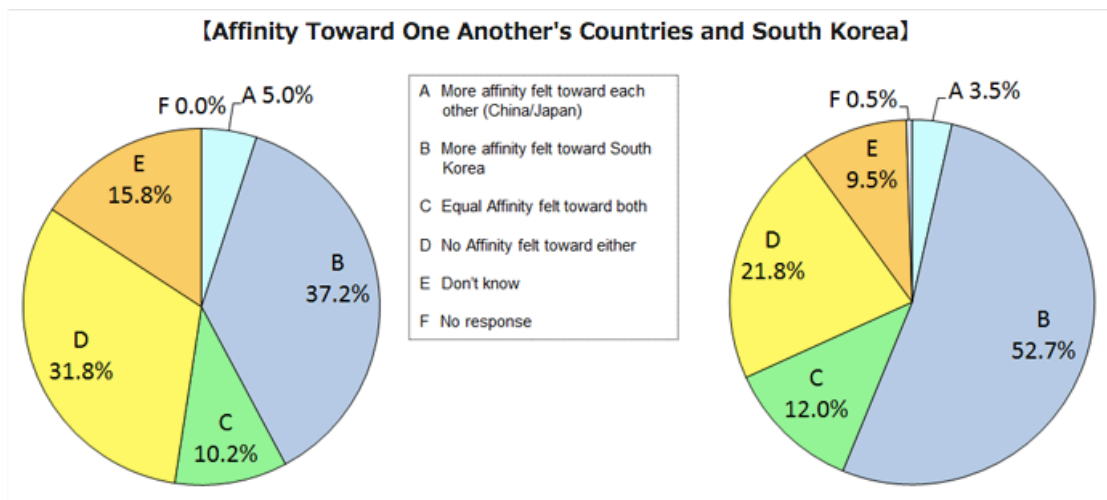


Chart 7 Affinity toward One Another's Countries and South Korea (Japan-China)

On the question of importance between Japan-South Korea (South Korea-Japan) and Japan-China (South Korea-China) relations, nearly half of the respondents answered that "both are of the same importance" at 47.0% (49.6% last year) for Japanese and at 47.0% (55.0% last year) for South Koreans. It is also worth noting that the response by South Koreans that "South Korea-China relations are more important" had increased from 35.8% (last year) to 43.8%. On the question of senses

of affinity to one another's country or to China, the majority of Japanese responded that they feel "more affinity to South Korea" at 37.2% yet it had decreased from 45.5% last year. The second largest answer from Japanese was "no affinity is felt toward either" at 31.8%. On the other hand, South Koreans who responded that they feel "more affinity to Japan" was only 12.3% (13.5% last year). Contrary to this, people who feel "more affinity to China" has reached 38.8% (36.2% last year), which is growing closer to the 40% mark.

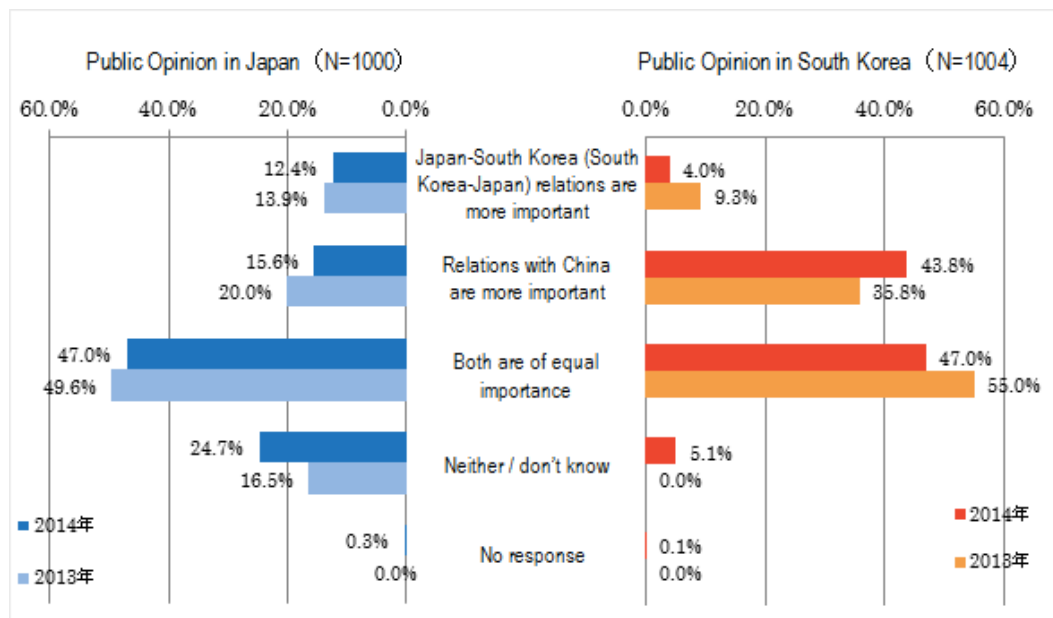


Chart 8 Importance of Japan-Korea (Korea-Japan) Relations and Relations with China

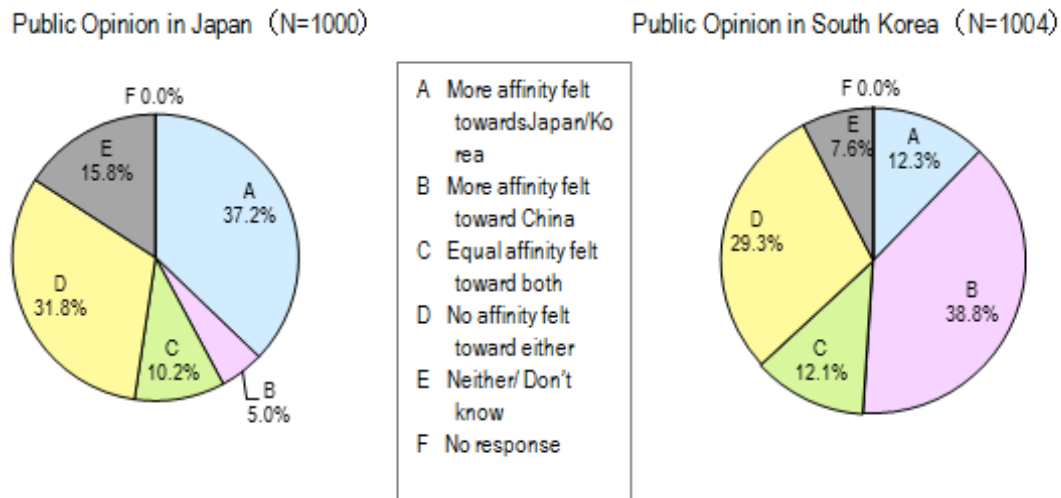


Chart 9 Affinity toward the Respective Countries

Here comes the primary puzzle of this research, why is South Korea distancing from Japan while getting closer to China's embrace despite its similar conditions and characteristics with Japan in the Cold War era and the current threaten coming from rising China and North Korea? In detail, three periods can be distinguished, during which the affinity is changing rather than consistent in the trilateral relationship. And according to Chart 1, the distance between China and Japan hasn't shift a lot for the last decade, the attitudes of South Korea towards each country become one of the key indicators. The public polls in the three countries have shown some signals of the barriers to bilateral relations respectively. Regarding hindrances on the development of bilateral relations between Japan and South Korea (seen in the Chart 10), the "Takeshima/Dokdo issue" was prevalent for both countries: 68.9% (83.7% last year) of the Japanese and 92.2% (94.6% last year) of the South Korean chose the answer. The second most popular answer for the Japanese was the "Anti-Japanese Sentiment

in South Korea," which comprised 46.6% (55.1% last year), or almost the half of the respondents, then it was followed by "historical awareness and education in South Korea" with 40.0% (33.8% last year). The second leading opinion in South Korea was "historical awareness and education in Japan," which reached the half-point mark at 52.2% (61.1% last year). While the major source of concern perceived by Japanese and Chinese is the "territorial issue", but it is on a declining trend. The concern for the absence of mutual trust between citizens in the two countries and the two governments is becoming prominent. In other words, the territorial disputes internalized into diverging identity recognition, and then exacerbated the bilateral relation. As seen in the Chart 11, the biggest concern perceived by Japanese is the "territorial issue," but it dropped to 58.6% from 72.1% last year. "China's anti-Japanese education" was considered as the second highest concern (42.9%). Lack of trust between the Japanese and Chinese governments (35.0%), and lack of trustful relations between Japanese and Chinese people (25.5%) are regarded as the major barriers to bilateral relations. 64.8% of Chinese respondents believed that the "territorial issue" was the biggest concern. This result is consistent with previous surveys. However, it dropped by 12 percentage points from 77.5% last year. 31.9% of Chinese showed concerns on "Japan's historical understanding and historical education" although it dropped slightly from 36.6% last year. As the consequences of territorial disputes, "lack of trust between the Chinese and Japanese governments" (25.4%) and "lack of trustful relations between Chinese and Japanese people" (15.5%) were regarded as major barriers to bilateral relations. To sum up, territory disputes

and historical issues are always the main barriers in Northeast Asia, together with the North Korean issues, developing into the changing right triangles in Chart 1.

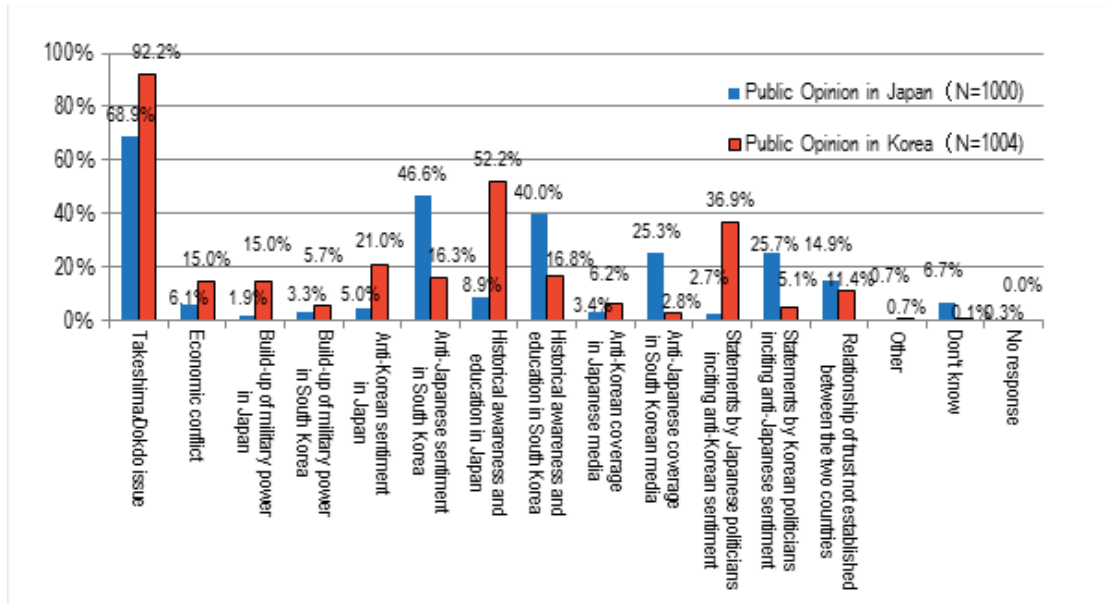


Chart 10 Barriers to Bilateral Relations (Japan-South Korea)

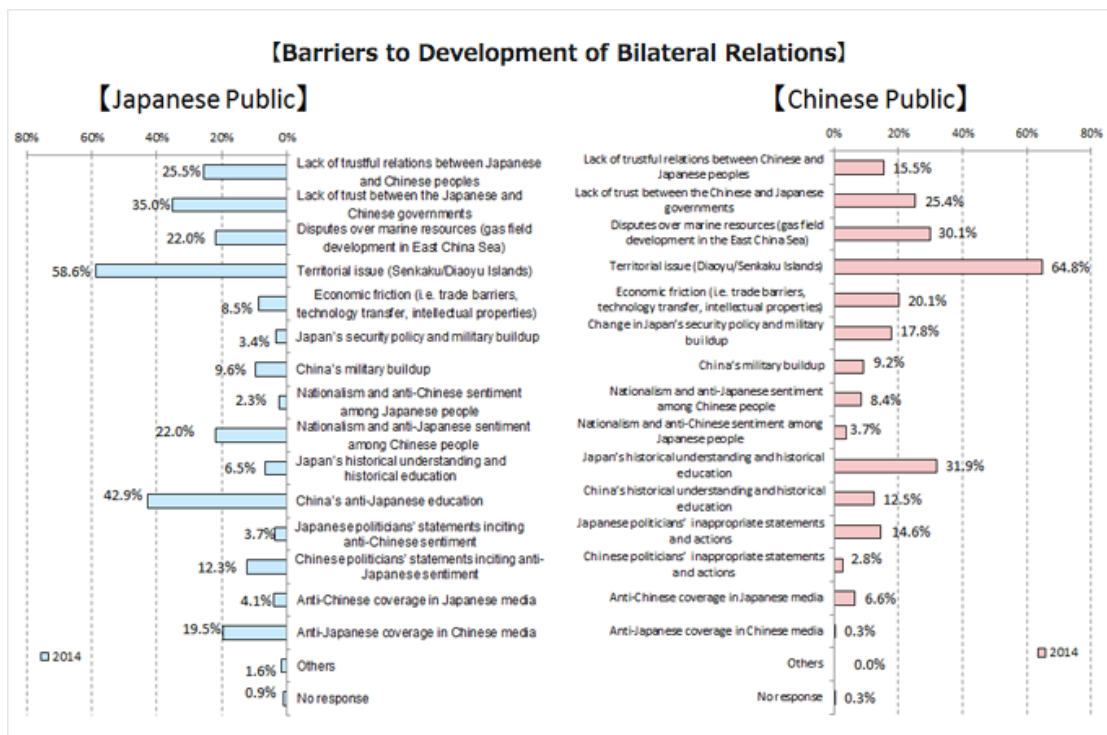


Chart 11 Barriers to Bilateral Relations (Japan-China)

The research is trying to apply national identity distance theory to explain the puzzling changing right triangle relationships among China, South Korea and Japan. In order to evaluate the national identity distance, considering the component of another country's identity associated with its international role, foreign policy makers face three sets of questions about themselves' and the other state's national identity. First, what is the country's essential contribution to international peace and security --- does it add to or detract from global stability? In East Asia particularly, is it a country with aggressive territorial claims? Answers to this question laid the keynote of enmity between both China-Japan and ROK-Japan bilateral relations. But it is noticeable that the enmity keynote is not exclusiveness. Amicable elements could come into being as long as the two parties reached some understandings in terms of regional foreign policy, for instance, the North Korean policy. The phenomenon is especially evident between Japan-ROK relationships during 2008 to 2012. Second, how does that nation-state relate to others --- does it respect the interests of its neighbors and partners, and devote sufficient attention to productive relations?<sup>33</sup> In East Asia particularly, is it maintaining a controversial historical narrative? Answers to this question determine each sides of the right triangle are beyond neutrality. Third, how does that nation-state relate to international norms and institutions? Is it by nature a supporter of multilateralism and the application of international law? In East Asia particularly, how does it deal with a troublesome neighbor country (which, refers to North Korea)? Answers to this

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<sup>33</sup> Naturally, the relations with third party states that matter most to State A's perception of State B are those relations of State B with states particularly relevant to State A.



question are one of the most important weights on South Korea's scale, which balance the affinity relationship with either China or Japan. In the next three chapters, all three factors will be used to measure the national identity distance in the three distinguishing phase, in order to explain the transforming affinity relationships.

## **Chapter 4 Territorial Disputes**

The centrality of territorial disputes in national identity constructs seems to be rather obvious. Territory is one of the main attributes of a nation and thus any instance of its contestation can be expected to play an important if not central role in the discursive construction of the national “self”. If disagreement exists over territory boundaries and sovereignty --- whether jointly disputing a significant area or if one side does not recognize major claims of the other --- the in-group may be uncertain whether the national identity of the out-group and that of themselves can co-exist. Applying to East Asia, the “Takeshima/Dokdo issue” between Japan and South Korea and the “Senkaku/Diaoyu islands” between Japan and China have become the greatest hindrances on shortening the national identity distance and developing bilateral relations each. The unresolved territory dispute laid a keynote of enmity possibilities between both ROK-Japan and China-Japan bilateral relations for the last decade.

### **4.1 Territorial disputes between South Korea and Japan**

Dokdo/Takeshima, is a group of small islets lying between Korea and Japan. The official Korean position is that there is no dispute about the island; Korea had administered the territory until Japan took it over as part of annexing Korea. The Japanese government, on the other hand, argues that Japan is the rightful owner of the

island and Korea is illegally occupying the territory.<sup>34</sup> Both sides present their own interpretations of historical documents, maps, and treaties, but cannot agree on which interpretation is the correct one.

Tensions over the island flared shortly after the Korean War came to an end. In January 1952, the president of Korea, Rhee Syng-Man, issued a declaration concerning Korea's maritime sovereignty, the so-called "Syngman Rhee Line," encompassing the disputed island. In 1953, after the island was designated as a free zone from US bombing range, and Japanese fishermen resumed fishing around the area as well as Korean fishermen.<sup>35</sup> A Japanese coastal guard vessel demanded the Korean fishermen to stop illegal fishing and leave the area, and the Korean authorities fired upon the Japanese vessel to protect their nationals, resulting in several deaths and arrest of fishermen from both sides, who were imprisoned in the country. In 1954, both countries de-escalated the situation by swapping the prisoners. Since then, Seoul has maintained de facto control of the island, while Japan has not abandoned its sovereignty claim to the territory.<sup>36</sup> Between then and the 1990s, although occasional claims of sovereignty over the Dokdo/Takeshima by high-level Japanese officials led to public anger and protests in Korea, both sides managed to keep the dispute under control.

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<sup>34</sup> Yongwook Ryu, *Identity and Security: Identity Distance Theory and Regional Affairs in Northeast and Southeast Asia*, Doctor Thesis in Harvard University, 2011

<sup>35</sup> Yongwook Ryu, *Identity and Security: Identity Distance Theory and Regional Affairs in Northeast and Southeast Asia*, Doctor Thesis in Harvard University, 2011

<sup>36</sup> For the Japanese version of the incident, please see the following webpage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan available at <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/takeshima/installation.html>. Accessed on 8 May 2011.

The dispute began to intensify in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with a series of actions and counter-actions taken by both Korea and Japan, to strengthen their sovereignty claim to the territory.<sup>37</sup> Table 1 lists major events relating to the Dokdo/Takeshima dispute since 2005. There are two crucial points marked the highest tension of the dispute up to date during the last decade. In 2005 Shimane prefecture announced “A National Takeshima Day” (February 22), which marked 100 anniversary of islets incorporation in Japan. As usually, nationalistic movements started in both countries but flare-up was calmed down by mutual efforts. In 2012 spring South Korea President Lee Myung-Bak visited Dokdo/Takeshima islets, consequently starting major protests in Japan as well as in Korea.

Table 1. Major Incidents Surrounding the Dokdo/Takeshima since 2005

Year	Incidents
2005	<p>Japanese Ambassador to Korea Takano Doshiyuki states that the island is part of Japanese territory.</p> <p>Shimane prefecture in Japan declares 22 February to be the “Takeshima Day”</p> <p>North Kyungsang prefecture in Korea declares October to be the “Dokdo Month”</p>
2006	<p>President Roh Moo-Hyun delivers a special Dokdo speech arguing that</p>

<sup>37</sup> Yongwook Ryu, *Identity and Security: Identity Distance Theory and Regional Affairs in Northeast and Southeast Asia*, Doctor Thesis in Harvard University, 2011

	<p>Japan's claim to the island is based on its imperial aggression</p> <p>Japanese "research vessel" attempts to conduct research in the surrounding area</p> <p>Five young Koreans called "Dokdo Riders" embarked on a world tour to raise the international awareness of the dispute and spread the message that Dokdo is part of Korean territory</p>
2007	Korea builds desalinization plants capable of producing clean water
2008	<p>Foreign Minister of Japan states that the island is part of Japanese territory</p> <p>Ministry of Education in Japan sets the new guideline that textbook should include reference to Takeshima as part of Japanese territory</p>
2010	An advertisement was aired in New York Times Square by a Korean NGO, with the message that Dokdo is an indispensable part of Korean territory
2011	A famous Korean singer Kim Jang-Hoon launched a Dokdo campaign, to raise the public awareness of the issue, mainly targeting young people
2012	South Korea president Lee Myung-Bak visited Dokdo
2013	Three Japanese scholars trod Dokdo soil and declared it as Korean land for the first time
2014	<p>Kim Kwan-yong, the governor of North Gyeongsang prefecture, visited the islets and issued the statement denouncing Japanese renewed territorial claims</p> <p>Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinated the English title of "Takeshima" and "Senkaku syoto"</p>

There is also further sign that the dispute is intensifying and expanding. Some Koreans have argued that Tsushima (in Japanese) --- known as Daemado (in Korean) --- is part of Korean territory, although the Korean government does not make the claim. In 1948, the Korean government formally demanded that the island be ceded to Korea based on “historical claims”. However, the claim was rejected by the SCAP in 1949. In 1951, the Korean government agreed to drop the earlier demand for Daemado (in Korean). But in 2010, a group of 37 members of the Korean National Assembly formed a forum to investigate into Korea’s territorial claims to Daemado (in Korean). A member of the forum stated that rather than baseless insistence on sovereignty, which is what Japan is doing with regards to Dokdo, they would thoroughly investigate into the historical origin and relationship between Daemado (in Korean) and Korea.<sup>38</sup>

Another bilateral dispute has been the name of an adjacent sea between the two countries. Japan calls it the Sea of Japan, while Korea calls it the East Sea.<sup>39</sup> The issue is only of symbolic value, and does not have any material consequences, as it would not affect the Exclusive Economic Zone claim by either side of the two countries. But despite the absence of any material benefits involved, the issue consumed diplomatic resources of both countries. The widely used name has been the Sea of Japan, but the Korean government claims that that usage did become popular

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<sup>38</sup> Yongwook Ryu, *“Identity and Security: Identity Distance Theory and Regional Affairs in Northeast and Southeast Asia,”* Doctor Thesis in Harvard University, 2011

<sup>39</sup> Incidentally, North Korea calls it the “East Sea of Korea”

in the late 19th and the early 20th centuries because of Japanese imperialism.<sup>40</sup> Hence, territorial dispute does not limited to the competition and dispute in terms of material resources, it may upgrade to the in-group's recognition on national identity in terms of international role of themselves and the out-groups. South Korean consider the aggressive territorial claims by Japan as a restoration of the imperialism, while Japanese thought the aggressive territorial claims by Korean is the result of "exchanging superiority" based on rapidly developing economy. This kind of national identity distance also exists in between China and Japan relationship for the past ten years.

#### **4.2 Territorial disputes between China and Japan**

The Senkaku/Diaoyu islands share some similarities with the Takeshima/Dokdo islands. The islands cover a small area but it belies their economic and strategic importance. On 25 October 1978, when Chinese Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping visited Japan to ratify the Sino-Japanese Treaty of Peace and Friendship, he told reporters following a meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda that both sides had decided "not to deal" with the issue as they negotiated the treaty:

*"It is okay to temporarily shelve such an issue if our generation does not have*

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<sup>40</sup> Yongwook Ryu, *Identity and Security: Identity Distance Theory and Regional Affairs in Northeast and Southeast Asia*, Doctor Thesis in Harvard University, 2011

*enough wisdom to resolve it. The next generation will have more wisdom, and I am sure they will eventually find a way acceptable to both sides.”*

The Chinese position has been expressed clearly and consistently ever since. However, Japan’s government denies that an understanding was reached between the two states in 1972 to “shelve” the dispute so that allowing bilateral relations to develop. The deny of the shelving agreement and Japan’s refusal to acknowledge the disputes’ existence has encouraged China to press its claims directly, by actions aimed at eroding Japan’s effective administration over the islands. Tokyo and Beijing have built their respective claims by cherry-picking aspects of the historical record. In general, Japan relies on modern notions of international law, while China’s case rests on concepts of historical title. As Daqing Yang notes, China attaches great importance to the period of Chinese initial discovery of the islands, whereas Japan stresses its decades of unchallenged administration.<sup>41</sup>

The trend of challenging Japan’s de facto control of the islands started as early as 2004, when seven Chinese activists landed on Uotsuri/Diaoyu Dao. For the first time, the Japanese police made arrests under Japan’s immigration management law, which includes a clause on expulsion of illegal foreign trespassers.<sup>42</sup> The Chinese Foreign

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<sup>41</sup> Daqing Yang, “History: From Dispute to Dialogue”, in Tatsushu Arai, Shihoko Goto and Zheng Wang eds, *Clash of National Identities: China, Japan and the East China Sea territorial Dispute*, Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center, 2013, pp. 23.

<sup>42</sup> Reinhard Drifte, “The Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands Territorial Dispute between Japan and China: between the Materialization of the ‘China Threat’ and Japan ‘Reversing the Outcome of World War II,” *UNISCI Discussion Papers*, May 2013.



Ministry protested, calling it a serious breach of sovereignty. The central government in Tokyo then reportedly intervened at the last minute, did not press for an indictment and ordered the release of the arrested Chinese. Apparently, Tokyo did not want to imperil the upcoming visit by Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi to China at that time.

In February 2007, the JCG detected a Chinese research ship in the vicinity of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands and warned it to stop operations. The ship refused and the Japanese government protested, on the grounds that under UNCLOS, foreign survey or research activities were not permitted without Tokyo's permission.<sup>43</sup> Beijing replied that notification was not needed since the Diaoyu Islands were part of Chinese territory. The situation deteriorated in 2008, when the JCG spotted two ships of the China Marine Surveillance (CMS) force in the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands area. This was interpreted by Japan as a major escalation by the Chinese, going beyond previous cases of intrusion by fishermen or protesters.

The September 2010 arrest of the Chinese trawler captain near the islands raised the temperature still higher. The Japanese government decided to try the Chinese captain in the Japanese court according to Japanese law while calling on the Chinese side to be calm. Predictably, however, the Chinese government took a strong stance,

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<sup>43</sup> Richard C. Bush, *The Perils of Proximity: China-Japan Security Relations*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2010

calling for the immediate release of the captain and then suspending the scheduled talks on the East China Sea and canceling a senior Chinese legislator's planned visit to Japan.

The true turning point in the dispute occurred in September 2012, when the Japanese government announced that it would purchase the leases for three of the five islands from their private owners, who bought Kitakojima and Minamikojima in 1972 and Uotsuri/Diaoyu Dao in 1978. The decision by the Noda government was ostensibly to pre-empt the purchase of the islands by Shintaro Ishihara, the right-wing governor of Tokyo, so that the islands would be “administered peacefully and stably”.<sup>44</sup> Throughout the subsequent crisis, the Noda government maintained that the transaction was a commercial one, which had changed ownership of the islands from private to public hands. Noda also reasoned that the purchase should be completed before the start of the new Chinese administration of president-in-waiting Xi Jinping. China protested vehemently, and anti-Japanese protests broke out across the country. Beijing hit back with economic sanctions and a consumer boycott of Japanese goods, as well as an escalation of its efforts to challenge and erode Japanese control over the islands.

On 23 November 2013, China took its challenging strategy a step further by declaring an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) covering part of the East China

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<sup>44</sup> Yu Tamura and Seima Oki, “Senkaku Talks with China End in Stalemate”, *Yomiuri Shimbun*, July 13, 2012.

Sea and the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. The ADIZ overlapped with the ADIZs of Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. China justified the setting up of the ADIZ as a “justified act of self-defense” and not aimed at any specific country. China’s Ministry of National Defense said that any aircraft would have to notify the Chinese authorities in advance and follow the instructions from the administrative organ of the East China Sea ADIZ. China’s military would adopt “defensive emergency measures” if aircraft failed to cooperate.<sup>45</sup> The ADIZ both promoted China’s claim to the Diaoyu Islands and challenged Japan’s effective control. The declaration confirmed that the Diaoyu Islands are a “core concern” for China, and put the islands in the same category as the South China Sea and Taiwan. According to *Asia Weekly*, a Hong Kong-based publication that often carries reliable reports on foreign-policy deliberations in Beijing, the imposition of the ADIZ was seen as a “great air–sea strategic breakthrough for China”.<sup>46</sup>

It is beyond doubt that the rise in tensions between Japan and China over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands played an important role in stimulating public interest in the territorial dispute with Korea and vice versa. Furthermore, it is similar that either the dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands or Takeshima/Dokdo, Japan’s political elites, both from the LDP and the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), who suffered from legitimacy deficit, exploited the disputes to enhance their credentials. Though so far, Prime Minister Abe has taken a relatively low profile stance on the territorial disputes

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<sup>45</sup> “*Air Defense Identification Zone of the P.R.C.*”, Xinhua, November 23, 2013

<sup>46</sup> “中国海空战略突破：防空识别区决策背后” (The Basis for China’s Air-Sea Strategic Breakthrough using the ADIZ), *Yazhou zhoukan (Asia Weekly)*, December 8, 2013.

with South Korea and China, and the opposition has not attempted to contest this policy. While avoiding the issues or keeping them quiet is a better approach than making the problem salient, it cannot be a long-term solution, especially under the circumstances that China and South Korea are surpassing Japan thanks to rapidly developing economy, territorial disputes become the biggest obstacles of regionalization development, negative views of Japan will not easily be uttered in public, but they will still reside deep down in the minds of the Chinese and Koreans.<sup>47</sup>

Without active resolutions to the issues, the national identity distance between China and Japan, South Korea and Japan, each, will consistently exist and even further enlarge. From Chinese and South Korean perspective, Japanese insistence on aggressive territory claims is a reflection of Japan's imperialism identity. While from Japanese perspective, China and Korea are presenting aggressive territorial claims based on superiority coming from rapid economic development, which consequently laid the keynote of enmity in two sides of the right triangle for the past ten years. However, just as we noticed before, enmity is not exclusive, historical controversies may escalate the hostilities while sharing regional strategies (most importantly the North Korean policy) may narrow the national identity distance and trigger some amicable elements. So does the generate of the transforming affinity triangles under the combined influences of territorial disputes, historical controversies and North Korean policies.

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<sup>47</sup> Yongwook Ryu, *Identity and Security: Identity Distance Theory and Regional Affairs in Northeast and Southeast Asia*, Doctor Thesis in Harvard University, 2011

## **Chapter 5 Historical Controversies**

Neutrality means that policymakers are struggling to establish mutual respect between the two national identities, so a broad sense of shared purpose is in the cards. Mutual respect is particularly difficult when two nation-states have difficulty tolerating each other's official version of the past and when contested elements of history form significant parts of national narrative and identity. Since the history problem in Northeast Asia has even been characterized as "history war" due to its intensity and the fervent reactions it generates, it is determined that each sides of the right triangle are beyond neutrality, just sometimes mitigated and sometimes intensified. Take the second phase as an example, since the clashes on historical issues between China and South Korea, together with the disagreement over North Korean policy, the national identity distance is narrowed down between Japan and South Korea compared to the enlarged one between China and South Korea.

### **5.1 Historical controversies between China-South Korea and Japan**

During the Cold War period, historical issues were overshadowed by the strategic rivalry between the liberal and socialist camps. They became international controversies in the region only in the 1980s. Both international and contextual

factors contributed to the rise of the “history problem”.<sup>48</sup> The decline of the cold war in the 1980s made it more permissible to discuss issues relating to war atrocities, guilt, and responsibility more freely than before. In addition, the death of Emperor Hirohito in 1989 contributed to the debate on war guilt and responsibility in Japan. The two main issues of the “history problem” are history textbook revision and Yasukuni Shrine visit. Although there are other issues concerning the “comfort women”, Nanjing massacre, and war reparations, etc, the textbook and Yasukuni controversies have been the most serious and involve all three countries, so the research examine them in detail here.

The most common means through which to pass the collective memories of society on to future generations is the official school education of history. By selectively representing the important events and their meanings, official history education shapes how future generations regard the nation’s past as well as its values and principles. History textbook narratives also define a state’s relations with others, instructing one on how to view historical relations with others and in turn shaping perceptions of proper identity in the present. Of course, the selection of topics and their interpretation is invariably attuned to different needs, interests, and identities of powerful actors in the present.<sup>49</sup> The most recent phase of the regionalized and internationalized textbook controversy started in 2001 when new narratives

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<sup>48</sup> Yongwook Ryu, *“Identity and Security: Identity Distance Theory and Regional Affairs in Northeast and Southeast Asia,”* Doctor Thesis in Harvard University, 2011

<sup>49</sup> Yongwook Ryu, *“Identity and Security: Identity Distance Theory and Regional Affairs in Northeast and Southeast Asia,”* Doctor Thesis in Harvard University, 2011

subsequently appeared in a New History Textbook produced in 2001 by Reform Group stated:

*“Japan’s postwar history education has led the Japanese people to forget Japan’s culture and traditions and to lose their national pride. In particular, the Japanese have been portrayed as criminals who must continue to apologize through the generations... Since the end of the Cold War, this ‘masochistic’ tendency has strengthened and the propaganda of former enemies has been narrated as historical fact in the textbooks now in use.”*

It also offered a modified war narrative by referring Nanjing “incident” rather than “massacre”, and depicting the war as a matter of “self-defense” combined a desire to liberate Asia from Western control. It further questioned the legitimacy of the Tokyo War Crime Trials. The textbook was approved by MOE as suitable for use in school in 2001 and again in 2005, although less than 2% of schools in fact use them.<sup>50</sup> Since then, the history textbook controversy has never been laid aside. On November 16, 2006, the Cabinet under the leadership of Prime Minister Abe Shinzo approved a bill to revise the Fundamental Law of Education to include a more nationalistic spirit --- “an attitude of loving one’s nation and homeland”. The Fundamental Law had been viewed as a constitution for education in Japan, and had never been revised until then. It had stood as the symbol of Japan’s postwar education

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<sup>50</sup> Yongwook Ryu, *Identity and Security: Identity Distance Theory and Regional Affairs in Northeast and Southeast Asia*, Doctor Thesis in Harvard University, 2011

with emphasize on individualism and peace. The critics fear that the revision would force the students to sing “kimigayo”, Japan’s national anthem, and stand for the rising sun flag during school ceremonies, both of which are symbols closely associated with Japan’s militaristic past.<sup>51</sup>

In terms of the Yasukuni controversy, compared to Koizumi’s repeated visits to the controversial shrine from 2001 to 2006, Abe implied when his first term of office started in summer 2006, that he would not necessarily go to the Yasukuni Shrine, assuming a neither-confirm-nor-deny stance.<sup>52</sup> However, during his quest to return to power in 2012, Abe frequently expressed his regret about not making a pilgrimage to Yasukuni Shrine while prime minister the first time around. The root of the Yasukuni controversy lays in the enshrinement of Tojo Hideki and thirteen other Class A war criminals, which took place in 1978. Although in Japan prime ministerial visits to the shrine caused a domestic political stir from the very beginning, the Yasukuni Shrine first became an international controversy in 1985 when then-Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro visited in his official capacity on the fortieth anniversary of Japan’s defeat in WWII. Before Nakasone, practically all-Japanese Prime Ministers visited the shrine in an unofficial capacity to pay respect to the war dead. The controversy reached its peak during the government of Koizumi Junichiro (2001-2006), who insisted on visiting the shrine once a year despite heated protests

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<sup>51</sup> Yongwook Ryu, “*Identity and Security: Identity Distance Theory and Regional Affairs in Northeast and Southeast Asia*,” Doctor Thesis in Harvard University, 2011

<sup>52</sup> Mike M. Mochizuki, “The Yasukuni Conundrum: Japan’s Contested Identity and Memory,” in Mikyoung Kim and Barry Schwartz eds., *Northeast Asia’s Difficult Past: Essays in Collective Memory*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, pp. 46-47.



from China and Korea.<sup>53</sup> The Yasukuni Shrine visits were the official reason why the Chinese government refused to take part in regular bilateral summit meetings between October 2001 and September 2006.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, Abe has come awfully close to triggering a new round of memory wars with China and Korea in other ways. Although Abe himself has refrained from going to Yasukuni, 168 members of the National Diet visited the shrine in April 2013, which was the largest number since 1987. Among those making the pilgrimage were three members of the Abe Cabinet, including Deputy Prime Minister Taro Aso. During a parliamentary interpellation in April 2013, Abe waffled on the question of whether or not Japan launched a war of aggression. According to him, “the definition of aggression has yet to be established in academia or in the international community” and “things that happened between nations will look differently depending on which side you view them from.”<sup>55</sup> He proposed drafting a new war-related statement for 2015, the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, which would be more “future-oriented” than the 1995 Murayama Statement of apology. If such a statement were to downplay Japan’s past transgressions by focusing on the future, it would dilute the moral power of the Murayama Statement and definitely inflame Asian countries that suffered from Japanese aggression and atrocities.

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<sup>53</sup> Yongwook Ryu, *Identity and Security: Identity Distance Theory and Regional Affairs in Northeast and Southeast Asia*, Doctor Thesis in Harvard University, 2011

<sup>54</sup> Yongwook Ryu, *Identity and Security: Identity Distance Theory and Regional Affairs in Northeast and Southeast Asia*, Doctor Thesis in Harvard University, 2011

<sup>55</sup> Kazuo Yamagishi, “Abe stands firm on definition of ‘aggression’ amid international outcry,” *Asahi Shimbun Asia & Japan Watch*, May 10, 2013.

It is not hard to understand why the Chinese and Koreans would be upset about prime ministerial visits to the shrine. Given the history and functions of Yasukuni Shrine, with the enshrinement of 14 Class A criminals and a controversial museum that justifies the WWII, Yasukuni is the rightful national site for mourning the war dead for many Japanese. The shrine's intricate connection with Japan's past imperial conquest evokes the painful memories of Japanese colonialism in the minds of many Chinese and Koreans.<sup>56</sup> Prime ministerial visits are tantamount to justifying the past wrongdoings of Japan. In other words, it symbolizes Japan's past militarism and imperialism and identifies the current Japan as the enemy and aggressor against "our nation". To Chinese and Koreans, the prime minister's visit to the shrine even validates their view that postwar Japan is the same as prewar Japan, and militarism is the constant feature of Japanese national identity. But for the Japanese, this view by Chinese and Koreans misunderstands the nature of postwar Japanese society. This gulf of perspectives as well as the national identity distance is hard, if not possible, to bridge.

The history problem is produced by small but influential right-wing groups in Japan, who seek to revise what they perceive is a "masochistic" (*jigyaku*) view of Japanese modern history. The purpose is not only to alter what has been the official interpretation of Japanese history, to portray its imperial period in a more positive light, but also to inculcate a sense of patriotism among the Japanese public, especially

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<sup>56</sup> Yongwook Ryu, *Identity and Security: Identity Distance Theory and Regional Affairs in Northeast and Southeast Asia*, Doctor Thesis in Harvard University, 2011

the youth, and to justify the “normalization” of Japan’s military activities. Once produced, the history problem is then consumed by nationalists and ordinary people in China and Korea, who respond almost unreflectively to what they perceive is an immoral and unjust act. Such action in China and Korea is interpreted by Japanese nationalists as evidence that Japan needs to be militarily and politically stronger, and provides further justification for the viewpoint advanced by right-wing groups in Japan that Japan needs to be strong to resist foreign pressure and threat.<sup>57</sup> What emerges in this mutual dependence of hatred is a tragic cycle of distancing national identities, and the notion of “Self” (China and Korea) as a moral and victimized and “Other” (Japan) as immoral and victimizer.

## **5.2 Historical clashes between China and South Korea**

Actually, China and South Korea are not always banding together smoothly, the issue of the “Dongbei Project” (literally East-North Project, in Korean 동북공정, and in Chinese 东北工程 originally 東北邊疆歷史與現狀系列研究工程) has emerged in South Korea as a negative factor in the Sino-South Korean relationship since 2002. The “Dongbei Project” is a Chinese historical research project, and the meaning of it, literally, is the systematic research for the history and present state of the Northeastern region. China had reviewed the research project since June 2001, and on

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<sup>57</sup> Yongwook Ryu, *Identity and Security: Identity Distance Theory and Regional Affairs in Northeast and Southeast Asia*, Doctor Thesis in Harvard University, 2011

February 18, 2007, the research was launched with the permission of the Chinese government. Thus, the “Dongbei Project” distancing the intimate relationship from 2008 to 2012.

The controversial points are that the Chinese research project intended to incorporate the history of Koguryo (고구려 高句麗), which is an ancient state located in the Manchu area and the Northern Korean peninsula and was built by Korean people, and Palhae (발해 渤海 from 698 to 926), which was built by Koguryo drifting people, including some of the Malgal (靺鞨) ethnic group, in the old Koguryo territory after Koguryo collapsed due to the invasion of the Tang (唐)–Silla (신라 新羅) alliance in 668, into ancient Chinese local history. From the perspective of China, the research project is necessary to arrange and enhance Chinese history, which happened in the past within its territory. From the Chinese standpoint, Koguryo and Palhae were local minority governments in Chinese history. However, the South Korean view of the Chinese research project is far different from that of China. South Koreans regard that the history of Koguryo and Palhae have been considered as Korean ancient history for a long time, and the two ancient states were built by Korean people. Although currently most of the old territories of Koguryo and Palhae belong to China, China had recognized that the history of the two ancient countries belong to Korean history before the Chinese “Dongbei Project” launched in 2002. This issue apparently stimulated the ethnic cultural nationalism of Korean people, including both South and North Korea. Many scholars in South and North Korea

remark that the Chinese research project is distorting Korean as well as Chinese histories and denying the truth as Japan is doing in their history textbooks. Moreover, some Korean people have a skeptical view of the Chinese research project. They consider that the research project is aimed at preventing possible territorial disputes about the Manchu area between China and the United Korea in the future. The issue of the “Dongbei Project” seriously impacted South Korean society and politics as well. Along with the issue of North Korean refugees in China, the “Dongbei Project” changed South Korean people’s perception of China from a reliable powerful country that could check possible U.S. arbitrary acts to another emerging hegemonic power that would interrupt and control South Korea when the current U.S. hegemonic power fades away, and the widening national identity distance between South Korea and China during the second phase (2008-2012) led the bilateral relationship to the tier of beyond neutrality.

Though South Korea had experienced an unexpected soft clash with China concerning Koguryo history. However, unlike China that immediately put a hold on the issue when South Korea showed anger, Japan conveniently ignored China and South Korea’s request to end the controversy. Shinzo Abe, who had first become the prime minister in 2006, and return to power in 2012, gets much of his inspiration from his grandfather, Nobusuke Kishi. A brilliant bureaucrat, Kishi was one of the architects of Japan’s imperial project in Manchuria and served as Minister of Munitions in the Tojo Cabinet during World War II. After being imprisoned as a

suspected Class-A war criminal after the war, Kishi became active in politics and served as prime minister in 1957-1960. He revised the US-Japan security treaty so that US forces could not intervene in Japanese domestic affairs, and ensured the United States would have a firmer commitment to defend Japan. Kishi also sought to overturn what he saw as the excesses of US-led reforms during the occupation era and to revise the post-war constitution, including Article 9. Because of this legacy, Shinzo Abe not only wants to revise the constitution, but also wants to challenge the Tokyo War Crimes Trial view of history that places the blame for the Pacific War entirely on Japan. Several reasons led to the unintended coalition between South Korea and China on the historical controversy front. The history problem becomes a lens through which China and Korea, view Japan's self-understanding of its history of aggression. Thus it is a political barometer by which to judge Japan's "morality" and intentions, and a shared understanding of the past is the fundamental basis upon which to build future political relations with Japan.<sup>58</sup> Consequently, China and Korea view the resolution of the "history problem" as a necessary condition for the continuation and development of relations with Japan while Japan did not fully realize that South Korea was pushed away by Japan's own action rather than pulled by China.

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<sup>58</sup> Yongwook Ryu, *Identity and Security: Identity Distance Theory and Regional Affairs in Northeast and Southeast Asia*, Doctor Thesis in Harvard University, 2011

## **Chapter 6 North Korean Policy**

Since amity means that two nation-states enjoy some sense of shared values and mutual understanding. To the extent the two sides are able to address security issues with a sense of “we-ness”. Thus it is more depending on the answers to the question about how to deal with a troublesome neighbor country, which, in Northeast Asia, refers to North Korea.

After WWII, although Korea was independent from Japanese colonialism, Korean peninsula was divided along with the latitude 38 degrees north. Northern part of Korean peninsula was under the control of the Soviet Union, while southern part was dominated by US influence. In 1948, Republic of Korea (South) and Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North) established their own governments respectively. In 1950, North Korea sponsored by the Soviet Union and China, invaded South Korea on June 25, and the Korean War lasted until 1953. Although the Korean War ended in 1953, a Cold-War-regional balance of power established between the US-Japan-South Korea side and the Soviet Union-China-North Korea side. Since then, the most people in two Koreas had perceived each other as enemies rather than “separated brothers” until the end of the Cold War era. Also, due to China’s participation to the Korean War and the Cold War international environment, the Sino-South Korean relationship was hostile in the 1950s and 1960s.

Many phenomena, which show the end of the Cold War, have apparently emerged since the end of the 1980s. The ideological competitions between capitalist/free market and communist camps ended with the collapse of the latter. Then, the US and USSR bipolar system transformed into a single superpower comprised of the US and several powerful countries, including China, Russia, Japan, Germany, Great Britain, and France, that could check possible arbitrary decisions of the US. Under this circumstance, Kim Il Sung, the ruler of North Korea, felt a serious external threat against maintaining his regime after the end of the Cold War ideological competitions and the decline of North Korea's alliance with the Soviet Union and China. At that moment, Pyongyang chose a nuclear development card for survival. The unexpected North Korea behaviors are deeply related to the post-Cold War regional inter-state relations. In the 1990s, the South Korean government was successful in normalizing diplomatic relationship with the Soviet Union (1990) and China (1992). These South Korea diplomatic successes made North Korea feel isolated in the region. In fact, the Cold War Soviet Union-China-North Korea alliance against the US-Japan-South Korea disappeared. The economic gap between North and South were obvious, and the aid from communist camp significantly decreased. The Pyongyang government at the time had two choices. One was to open its door to the outside and to take the route of Chinese economic development model. The other one was to devote itself to the development of a nuclear program whether for self-defense or to have a useful card it could hold on to at the bargaining table in the future. Consequently, the first North Korea nuclear crisis broke out in 1993. The US-South



Korea alliance reacted immediately and sent a strong warning against any further North Korean military action. Although the US-South Korean alliance showed firm security ties against a nuclear threat from North Korea, it still exposed disagreement on how to deal with North Korea and its nuclear program, neither did Japan. The US and Japan governments seriously reviewed a partial military reaction that was aimed at bombing nuclear facilities in North Korea, while the South Korea Kim Young-sam administration objected to any military action in the Korean peninsula and wanted to press Pyongyang to give up its nuclear program. The Kim Dae-jung administration, after the Kim Young-sam administration, also launched an engagement policy, the “Sunshine policy”, and the summit between South and North Korea was held in 2000. After the summit, North Korea was not an enemy any longer for the majority of South Korean people, but rather a brother separated by Western powers’ national interests after WWII. Moreover, considering that China had long been a protector of North Korea, the “Sunshine policy” shift signified a turn towards China at the expense of Japan, possibly including the United States.

Since 2002, the abductees issues and the North Korean nuclear program had started to draw people’s attention again, Japan took a tougher stance against North Korea. Japan aligned with the hardliners with the Bush administration to push North Korea into the corner, expecting the North Korean leader to step back and compromise. From the Japanese perspective, both South Korea and China, advocating the North Korea position, looked suspicious. Instead of putting pressure on North

Korea, the two countries continued to talk to and negotiate with North Korea leaders, gave assistance to North Korea without reciprocal returns, and showed sympathy for the rhetoric of the North Korean government. Whenever North Korea provoked its neighbors with missile launches, nuclear tests, and military provocations, Japan took unilateral or multilateral initiatives to adopt sanctions against North Korea. South Korea and China, on the other hand, remained reluctant, or at least hesitant to take hard-line measures vis-à-vis North Korea. From the Korean perspective, the Roh Moo-Hyun administration (2003-2008) inherited the national identity conception from the “Sunshine policy”, the hard line policy toward North Korea conducted by the Bush Administration and Japan led South Korea people to perceive the US and Japan as the biggest threats to the peace and stability of the Korean peninsula as well as the biggest barriers for the two Korea’s reunification. On the other hand, many South Korean people regarded China, which objected to Japan and the Bush administration’s hard line policy toward North Korea, as a reliable country that could check the arbitrary acts of the US. Indeed, China has objected to the US hegemonism and considered the US hard line policy toward North Korea as a plan that aims to enhance its influence over the Korean peninsula and Japan as his follower. The South Korean progressive ruling group and young generation, especially, saw that the US hawkish stance was not only a national security issue but also a strong will of the US to take regional control. For them, China’s endeavors to protect North Korea from the US pressures created an impressive image of a powerful country, which South Korea could turn to because of US pressure and possible threat of war in the Korean

peninsula, at that time. South Korea's trust towards China during 2005 to 2007 had shortened the national identity distance between the two while distanced Japan and US on the other hand. Depending on the shared policy to North Korea during this period, China and South Korea had found the sense of "we-ness" and more amicable signals could be found in bilateral relations, while none-amicable elements could be seen in either China-Japan or ROK-Japan relations.

However, South Korean conservative groups, mainly old generation who experienced the Korean War, asserted that the South Korean national security and economic development could not and would not be preserved without cooperation with the US and Japan. They denounced the governmental pro-North Korean policy, including the "Sunshine policy", and emphasized the role of the US in solving the North Korean nuclear issue and bringing about regional peace and stability. Also, the conservative and pro-American groups argued that China's policy favored North Korea for her own national security, economic, and political interests. In other words, Beijing wanted to keep regional peace and stability for its continuous economic development, to maintain North Korea as a buffer state for their security strategy, and to restrain neither the US nor Japan's hegemonic ambition. Thus, the advent of a new conservative president, Lee Myung-Bak, brought about shifts in foreign policy initiatives. Most of all, President Lee made a realist turn by emphasizing a tougher stance towards North Korea. He drastically revised the logic of "benign engagement" policy by giving priority to national security concerns, which was denuclearizing

North Korea. The “benign engagement policy” was based on the logic of awarding the sense of comfort and security by assisting North Korea to get out of economic hardships. It was hoped that North Korea would subsequently come out to the regional or global community with an attitude of reforming the regime. This would eventually and ultimately bring about a denuclearized North Korea. But during this period, in the eyes of South Koreans, the question as to whether China is the most reliable partner to realize the denuclearization of North Korea has not been solidly answered. Despite rhetorical commitments to the denuclearization of North Korea, a Chinese priority concern seems to lie in guaranteeing the survival of the North Korean regime sometimes. As Bonnie Glaser points out, Beijing is reluctant to join a multilateral effort to persuade North Korea to give up its nuclear ambition. The gap between China and South Korea has grown in the aftermath of the March 2010 sinking of the South Korean warship Cheonan and the November 2010 artillery attack on Yeonpyeong Island, which appeared to mark a shift in South Korean attitudes toward not only the North but also China. South Korean perceptions that China “protected” North Korea in response to these incidents have affected the bilateral relations, arousing a domestic debate on the relative value of South Korea’s security alliance with the United States and Japan versus its economic partnership with China, driving concerns about China’s apparent prioritization of its “traditional friendship” with the North over its “strategic cooperative” with the South, and revealing conflicting visions of Korean reunification. Thus, compared to the previous South Korean government, the Lee administration gave more emphasis on upgrading

ties with the US and Japan. In 2008, the Korean president and the Japanese Prime Ministers met, either in a bilateral or in a multilateral setting, at least five times on official occasions. In 2009, the Korean president had six summit meetings with the Japanese Prime Minister. As a result of political reconfigurations in both Japan and South Korea, the foreign policy orientations of Japan and South Korea contain more converging elements than discord, as well as the national identity distance; while China and South Korea, on the contrary. Japan and South Korea are in agreement on adopting a hedging policy strategy towards China, which means deeply engaging China in the economic arena while forging strong alliances with the United States in the security realm. In dealing with North Korea, the US and South Korea, together with Japan, rely on a combined strategy of pressure and dialogue. As a result of leadership shift to conservative president in South Korea, together with the historical clashes between South Korea and China, even though the territorial disputes and historical controversies remain unresolved between South Korean and Japan, national identity distance between South Korea and Japan is shortened compared to the distance between South Korea and China during 2008 to 2012, more amicable elements could be found in the former bilateral relationship.

The North Korea policy of the Park Geun-Hye government, which launched on Feb 25, 2013, can be summarized as: decisively strengthening deterrence against North Korea; resolving the North Korea nuclear issue through multi-faceted negotiations; and moving towards normalization of inter-Korean relations in tune with

process in denuclearization. The Park government will stand firm on its stance on denuclearization. Although North Korea has secured its status as a de facto nuclear weapons state, South Korea can neither extend diplomatic recognition of the status, nor accept the nuclear disarmament talks that Pyongyang has demanded. In a bid to realize denuclearization of the North, the new government in the South will likely seek multi-faced negotiations, including inter-Korean nuclear talks and a trilateral dialogue with the US and China, in addition to the Six-Party and bilateral talks. Beyond that, the Park government will sustain its effort for normalization of inter-Korean relations, despite North Korea's third nuclear test. This means that South Korea will proceed with the "Korean peninsula trust process," that President Park promised during her election campaign, particularly in connection with denuclearization of North Korea. In respect of this, Park's transition team announced that her government's response to humanitarian issues (provision of aid to the North, reunion of separated families, and repatriation of South Korean prisoners of war and abductees) will be dealt with separately from political issues, along with the regular opening of dialogue channels and full respect for existing inter-Korean agreements.<sup>59</sup> Going further, the Park government will pursue mutually beneficial economic cooperation to keep pace with progress in North Korean denuclearization, and on the basis of the resultant accumulation of mutual trust, will reopen the possibility of a North-South Korean economic community.<sup>60</sup> It appears that the Park government

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<sup>59</sup> Soo-Ho, Lim, "Park Geun-Hye's Northeast Asia Policy: Challenges, Responses and Tasks," *SERI Quarterly*, Apr 2013.

<sup>60</sup> Transition Committee of the 18<sup>th</sup> Presidential Elections, "*National Policy Agenda for the Park Geun-Hye Administration*", Feb 2013, pp. 191-192.

plans a dual-track approach of deterrence and engagement. This is not new, but an approach used by Park's predecessors. The Park government, however, is expected to put more weight on deterrence than the Kim Dae-Jung and Roh Moo-Hyun governments, but with greater engagement than the Lee Myung-Bak government.<sup>61</sup> As president-elect, Park Geun-Hye sent her first special envoy to Beijing, neither to Washington nor Tokyo; a small gesture that implies bigger changes ahead. It is based on her assessment that the preceding Lee Myung-Bak government failed to manage relations with China because it tilted too much toward Washington and Tokyo. Although President Park is expected to pay particular attention to stabilization of the ROK-Japan relationship, as she is the daughter of President Park Chung-Hee, whose legacy includes normalization of relations with Japan, she has called for a South Korea-US-China trilateral strategic dialogue and is signaling defensive cooperation with China to resolve the North Korean issues. Since Park government is seeking a balance between the dual-track approach of deterrence and engagement towards North Korea, it cannot be the definitive elements to judge the comparative national identity distance of ROK-China or ROK-Japan. However, Japan's recent provocations over territories and historical issues have been keeping driving South Korea to China's embrace, because of that, South Korea may lack strategic trust to Japan to share foreign policies on security issues and feels more amicable and trusting to China.

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<sup>61</sup> Soo-Ho, Lim, "Park Geun-Hye's Northeast Asia Policy: Challenges, Responses and Tasks," *SERI Quarterly*, Apr 2013.

As the territorial disputes and the historical controversies remain unresolved during the past ten years, whether the three side share any commonalities over the North Korean policy counts a lot on the possibilities of amicable elements. On one hand, China and South Korea are easier to find commonalities of their national identities without drastic territorial disputes; on the other hand, both of them have territorial disputes as well as historical controversies with Japan. Thus, no matter the past ten years or a short term in the future, the macro trend in the region will be China-South Korea's affinitive cooperation. The specificity in Phase II (2008-2012) is the result of China-South Korea historical clashes and the conservative leader, Lee Myung-Bak's policy priority to the US and Japan.



## Chapter 7 Conclusion

Because Abe need not to face another national election until summer 2016, Japan may finally have a stable government after a succession of six Prime Ministers since 2006. Abe could become one of the rare Japanese Prime Ministers to serve four or more years. After the World War II, only five Prime Ministers have served that length of time. If he can lead his party to another set of electoral victories in 2016, Abe could even become the longest-serving Prime Minister in Japan's modern history --- the record is currently held by Eisaku Sato, who served as Prime Minister for about 7 years and a half from November 1964 to July 1972. Throughout the research, we noticed the importance of leadership change, which correspond with acknowledgement and adjustment in perceptions about a country's international role (national identity distance), and drive changes in its international relations (amity/neutrality/enmity). For this reason alone, understanding where Abe might lead Japan is critical for thinking about the future trilateral relations of China-ROK-Japan and the East Asian regionalization process.

Through the analyzing of the three set of questions that the inter-group used to determine "self" and "others", the research find that on territorial disputes, China and South Korea hold basically similar beliefs that aggressive territorial claims made by Japan are the reflection of its imperialism identity while Japan thought the other two are making aggressive claims thanks to the economic superiority in recent years; on

historical controversies, China and South Korea shared the identity of “moral and victim self” against Japanese insistence on the identity of “immoral and victimized other”, while Japan thought the other two are play historical card to damage its international reputation; on North Korean policy issues, where the leadership change may have significant influence, China and South Korea share the similar negotiating strategy in most times while Japan stand with the US hard line, the only exception is during the second phase (2008-2012), when even the former two issues remain debating, South Korea under a conservative leader, Lee Myung-Bak felt more affinity towards Japan.

Moreover, the research proved that due to the uniqueness of cultural and historical background of East Asian countries, the factors of national identity offers more comprehensive explanations combined with neorealist and neoliberal perspectives to grasp the nature of South Korea’s and Japan’s relations with China for the last decade. The way refers to “the widening/narrowing of identity distance could increase/decrease the likelihood of inter-actors conflict. In other word, the amity is more likely when the two countries share a similar outlook on national identity, while a diverging composition of identities is prone to lead to enmity. Neither the amity nor the enmity is exclusiveness, there might be keynote combined with amicable/hostile elements.”

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